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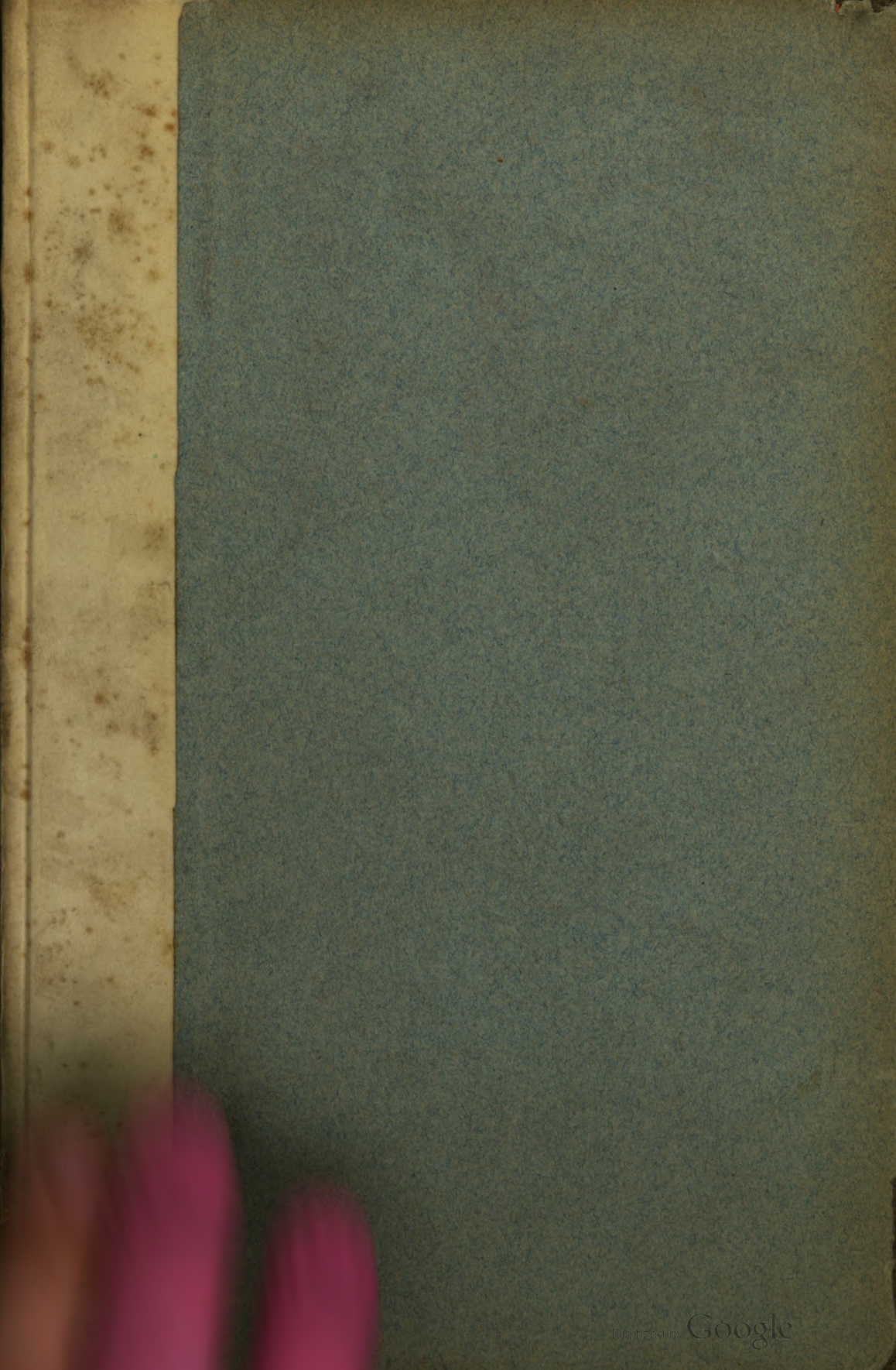
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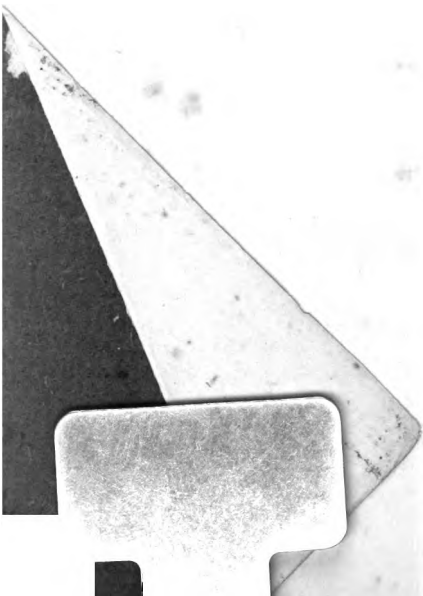
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SPOILING THE EGYPTIANS.

A Tale of Shame.

TOLD FROM THE BLUE BOOKS.

BY

J. SEYMOUR KEAY.

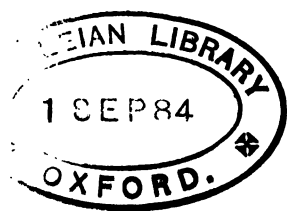
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PREFACE.

THE present very serious complications in Egypt render it urgently necessary that their causes should be clearly stated. These, in the main, are consequent on the evil spirit which actuates European Officialism, in dealing with Native Races. So strong is this spirit, that it is scarcely to be hoped that the present revelation will produce more than a partial and transient improvement. Indeed, unless Parliament takes prompt and stringent measures to ensure that English Agents shall altogether renounce their habit of persistent encroachment on, and truculence towards, the Native Governments to which they are accredited, and their equally baneful practice of hoodwinking their superiors at home, the present exposure will most probably only lead to more careful concealment and misrepresentation, without any change of policy.

Some time ago certain East India Blue Books were subjected by me to an analysis similar to that now adopted towards the Egyptian Papers. Unhappily, the only result thus far has been that our Indian officials, duly warned thereby, now compile their State Papers more cunningly than before, relegating all important despatches to a Secret Department which places itself beyond the ken of Parliament altogether.

Warned by the incredulity with which all personal testimony regarding the cause and nature of the Egyptian National Movement has been received, I have entirely avoided making use of the results of my own observation, during a twenty years' residence in the East, throughout which I have had many opportunities of becoming acquainted with the character of the Arab race.

The present disclosures are therefore drawn entirely from Official documents; which, moreover, it must be remembered, do not, in a case like this, divulge all the facts that they should reveal, but only what their compilers cannot conceal.

Considering the tremendous disproportion between the powers of England and Egypt, nothing but the most indisputably righteous cause could justify a war between them. Even in such a case, England's part in the struggle could hardly add to her dignity. Jingoism, though immoral, had a respectable element in it. It sought to take up arms for the glory of its country, and against a foeman worthy of its steel. But in our intervention in Egypt we have, as a motive, pecuniary gain instead of glory, and, as a foe, a petty and defenceless State instead of an equal.

The chief points demonstrated in the following pages are:—

1. That a Debt of about 90,000,000*l.* has been imposed on Egypt by European Speculators, in consideration of which only about 45,500,000*l.* were even nominally received.
2. That all the money received has already been repaid by Egypt, together with interest at 6 per cent.
3. That nevertheless, even under the reduced terms fixed by the Khedive's Law of Liquidation in the year 1880, the people of Egypt have still to pay annually about 8 per cent. interest on the amount of money actually received and repaid, and that this burden has to be borne substantially in perpetuity, as no sinking fund exists for the reduction of the greater part of the Debt.
4. That with the exception of 16,000,000*l.* spent on the Suez Canal, no part of the 45,500,000*l.* above mentioned has been spent in the improvement of the country; the whole of the remainder having been lost or paid away as interest; and that consequently the annual abstraction from the country of something like half its

revenues, in payment of interest, without a return of any kind whatever, is an object diametrically opposed to the good of the Egyptian people.

5. That the European Control was established solely to carry out the above injurious object.
6. That the action of the Control, in making the poor cultivators provide the vast sums required, while allowing their own countrymen to remain exempt from taxation, and providing them with highly paid posts all over the country, has given the Egyptian people grave cause for discontent.
7. That the sole ground on which England and France have based their claim to interfere with the finances of Egypt, viz. that International Engagements exist, which bind the Egyptian State to commit its Revenues to the charge of the European Control, is false in fact.
8. That, nevertheless, resting solely on the pretence of such International Engagements, the two Powers, in January of the present year, absolutely refused to allow the Egyptian Chamber of Delegates to vote their own Budget.
9. That although the Chamber, with great moderation, pledged themselves to exclude altogether from their cognizance the one half of the Budget, viz., that which deals with those revenues which have been assigned for the payment of the interest on the Debt, the two Powers would not allow them even to vote the other half, which provides funds for the internal Administration, *lest the Delegates might thereby be enabled to dismiss some Europeans from the service of the State, or to reduce their enormous salaries.*
10. That this most unreasonable refusal caused the Chamber to force the Khedive to appoint a National Ministry in February last.
11. That the two Powers thereupon presented an ultimatum, demanding the resignation of this National Ministry and the exile of Arabi Pasha, was presented with a full knowledge that its terms would be rejected, and that hostilities would follow; and that therefore the armed intervention now entered on by the British Nation is really directed against the Parliament of Egypt for voting its own Budget, and not against Arabi Pasha for any military action whatever.
12. That our officials in Egypt have systematically deceived the Home Government as to the real state of National feeling in that country, being bent only on maintaining their hold on its internal Administration, and retaining lucrative salaries, patronage, and privileges; and that the blame which attaches both to the present Government and that of the late Lord Beaconsfield chiefly consists in their having allowed themselves to be thus deceived by interested officials.

With these facts on record, it is obvious that any action whatever, adverse to the aspirations of the Egyptian people after Constitutional Government, is quite unworthy of Great Britain, which has always been the champion of political liberty and Representative Institutions; and, *à fortiori*, that armed intervention for the purpose of re-establishing the *status quo ante*, which necessarily involves the repression of Representative Government in Egypt, is one of the greatest crimes that could be committed by the British Nation, and must brand it with infamy in the pages of history.

These facts and considerations cannot but retain their full force, however weak may be the resistance offered by Egypt to our might, and whatever may become of her military leaders.

J. SEYMOUR KEAY.

August, 1882.

SPOILING THE EGYPTIANS.

A TALE OF SHAME.

PART I.

SPOLIATION AND ITS RESULTS—OPPRESSION, MISERY, AND
DESPAIR—CREATE A NATIONAL MOVEMENT.

TWENTY years ago the interests of England in Egypt, and of the Egyptians in their own country, were one and the same. The geographical position of Egypt, and the position and needs of our Indian Empire remain to-day as they were then. It is true that the Suez Canal, which has increased a hundred-fold the amount of merchandise passing through Egypt, was at the time referred to only begun to be constructed. This hundred-fold increase has, however, but further enlarged the dimensions of interests already identical. Twenty years ago the European Powers were jealous of each other's influence in Egypt, and the possibility of trouble arising from such jealousy was always freely recognized; but no one dreamed of opposition to free transit through the country coming from the Egyptian race. Such a thing as any obstruction or annoyance to a European in Egypt was never heard of. As an Egyptian of note in Cairo said in 1862, when discussing with the writer the increasing importance about to be acquired for his country by the Canal, "*Egypt is a turnpike road, of which the Egyptians get all the tolls. The more the road is used, the wealthier we become. Why should we be other than friendly to those who thus enrich us?*"

From 1862, however, a new element began to be infused, quite unconnected with the position of Egypt as the world's highway. The ruler of Egypt was personally in debt, and in 1862 and 1864 British speculators raised for him two loans, amounting to upwards of 10,000,000*l.* The State, although it got none of the money,¹ was saddled with the debt. A further loan, amounting nominally to 3,000,000*l.*, was raised in London and Paris in 1866 on very onerous

¹ Parliamentary Papers, 1425 of 1876, footnote to p. 8.

terms; and in 1868 a still larger amount of 11,890,000*l.* was added to the debt of Egypt.

At this stage the Turkish Government wisely took alarm. They issued a Firman declaring that "the taxes should not be employed otherwise than for the real requirements of the country," and that "Foreign Loans pledge for many years the revenues of the country," *concluding with a prohibition to raise any further Egyptian Loans, unless with the permission of the Turkish Government.*¹

The Khedive's European advisers were, however, equal to the occasion. They persuaded him that he could still hypothecate the revenues of the Crown lands without the permission of Turkey. Accordingly, in 1870 a fresh debt of upwards of 7,000,000*l.* was created, *for which only 5,000,000*l.* was received.* The Porte, on the very inception of this transaction, presented to the British Government a solemn and dignified disclaimer, "*protesting beforehand against any financial arrangement, not previously authorized by His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, which would affect directly or indirectly the revenues of Egypt.*"² The only notice taken of this protest was a simple acknowledgment of its receipt.

But larger schemes were in contemplation. It had been found possible to carry through a transaction of 7,000,000*l.* in defiance of an Imperial protest, but this it was felt would probably not be the case with one of five times that sum. Still, money was plentiful in London, and the spirit of speculation rife. It was therefore determined to secure, by fair means or foul, a legal basis for the projected new loan, in the shape of a brand-new Firman from the Sultan. A visit by the Khedive to Constantinople was planned, during which, "through corrupt means,"³ namely, by "making the Grand Vizier a present of 50,000*l.*,"⁴ he succeeded in persuading the Sultan to sign an Imperial Hatt in his favour "*without communicating with the Imperial Divan.*"⁵

Of the two chiefs of the Turkish Ministry, "neither affected to conceal the regret⁶ with which he regarded" this matter. They ventured to suggest to our

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2395 of 1879, p. 45.

² Parliamentary Papers
100 of 1870, p. 1.

³ Parliamentary Papers
2395 of 1879, p. 28.

⁴ Ibid. p. 28.

⁵ Ibid. p. 29.

⁶ Ibid. p. 28.

Ambassador that, in the interests of Egypt, a document got by such means *should be repudiated as illegal and invalid, "on the ground of its not having been registered in the archives of the Porte, as required by the laws of the Empire."*¹ The reply of our Ambassador would seem to

¹ Parliamentary Papers 2395 of 1879, p. 29.

show that even at that date the exploitation of Egypt was deemed to be a "British interest." Sir H. Elliot thus records his answer:—"I begged him not to allow such a thought to remain on his mind. The word of the Sultan had been passed to the Viceroy, and, at whatever inconvenience, it must now be maintained."² Thus the "unspeakable Turk" in vain pleaded with the representative of Christian and philanthropic England to save the people of Egypt from falling a prey to the oppressor and the extortioner! On the strength of the new Hatt a fresh debt of 32,000,000*l.* was immediately fastened on the country, FOR WHICH A SUM OF "ONLY 20,062,658*l.* WAS, EVEN NOMINALLY, RECEIVED."³

² Ibid. p. 29.

³ Parliamentary Papers 1425 of 1876, p. 6.

Things were not intended to stop here. It was felt that Europeans who had lent so much money to Egypt might well press the Khedive to enter into commercial arrangements with them, and to bestow on them appointments proportionate to the great advantages their loans might be supposed to have conferred on the State. A new Firman was therefore demanded, conferring on the Khedive power to contract "Conventions for all relations which concern Foreigners," "to arrange all their relations with the Government and the population," and to raise further loans "whenever he may think it necessary."⁴ The Porte had great misgivings as to the advisability of this step. It was, however, apparently assumed that in Turkey every man, including His Imperial Majesty himself, has his price, though in some cases it may be a large one. Once more the device of isolating the Sultan from his ministers was resorted to. A gigantic bribe of 900,000*l.* in cash was "laid at his Majesty's feet,"⁵ and on 8th June, 1873, the Khedive obtained his new Firman. Our Ambassador records that, as on the occasion of the former venal bargain, "neither the Grand Vizier nor the Minister for Foreign Affairs affected to regard the measure

⁴ Parliamentary Papers 2395 of 1879, p. 50.

⁵ Ibid. p. 31.

*with indifference;” that “the Firman was not drawn up as usual at the Porte, but at the Palace, and the Grand Vizier was not consulted upon it,” and, he adds, “The transaction has been spoken of to me with sorrow by persons in the highest position.”*¹

¹ Parliamentary Papers 2395 of 1879, p. 31.

² Parliamentary Papers 1425 of 1876, p. 10.

³ Ibid. footnote to pp. 7 and 8.

⁴ Ibid. p. 7.

⁵ Ibid. p. 8.

By such corrupt proceedings a debt of 72,000,000*l.* was in a few years fastened on the Egyptian State.² *The terms arranged were so usurious that the entire proceeds of Loans aggregating upwards of 68,000,000*l.* only amounted to 45,500,000*l.*, of which, moreover, about 10,000,000*l.* went to pay the private debts of a former Viceroy.³ The minimum rate of interest charged on the revenues of the country in respect of these loans was 12½ to 13 per cent., and the maximum was 26½ per cent.⁴ Moreover, a sum of 9,000,000*l.* of one of these loans had not been paid in cash at all, but in overdue and depreciated “bonds of the floating debt, purchased sometimes at a price as low as 65 per cent. and paid into the Treasury at 93 per cent., an operation which” Mr. Stephen Cave naively observes, “materially enhanced the profits accruing to the negotiators of the Loan.”⁵*

The terms were, in fact, such as no small State like Egypt could possibly sustain. About the middle of 1875, the natural result, default, became imminent. Our Consul-General thereupon persuaded the Khedive that he must call into his counsels a British officer to investigate matters. The Right Honourable Stephen Cave, M.P., Her Majesty’s Paymaster-General (whose report has been already quoted), accordingly arrived in Egypt, on a special mission, in the end of that year.

Mr. Cave found the condition of things almost desperate. In addition to the principal of the Loans due to Foreign Bondholders, he found that a floating debt to the extent of 18,000,000*l.*⁶ had been incurred, chiefly in order to pay the half-yearly interest, and that this floating debt was being renewed from time to time at the ruinous rate of 25 per cent. per annum.⁷ He further found every available tax in the country pledged to the Bondholders. “*The Loan of 1873,*” wrote Mr. Cave, “*swallows up every resource.*”⁸ A sum of 34,898,000*l.*

⁶ Ibid. p. 8.

⁷ Ibid. p. 12.

⁸ Ibid. p. 8.

*had been paid away as interest and sinking funds in ten years, and yet the principal of the debts was greater than ever.*¹

¹ Parliamentary Papers 1425 of 1876, p. 8.

Extraordinary measures had, moreover, even at that early date, been adopted to meet the Bondholders' claims. It now suits our officials to make the groundless assertion that the Egyptian peasantry were formerly more grievously oppressed under Native rule than they have been since European dictation began, but the reverse is proved by all independent testimony. In the year 1864 an amount of 4,937,405*l.* only was raised as revenue from the people as against 10,689,070*l.* extracted from them in 1875. The method of obtaining this double revenue for payment to the Bondholders must be explained. Mr. Cave states that "extortion was practised on the fellah-*heen*," whereby "*it is to be feared that three years' taxes are sometimes paid in two years,*"² that there were collected "forced loans which the peasant cannot distinguish from taxes," and that there were probably also "special duties which lead to oppression and extortion."³

² Ibid. p. 9.

³ Ibid. p. 9.

The annual drain of 5,700,000*l.* for interest on Debt, out of a gross revenue of 8,500,000*l.*⁴ was, in fact, found to be insupportable, *being in a proportion, perhaps, never before exacted from any nation under heaven.* The ordinary revenues had proved powerless to supply it, and so, in order to provide for it for a few years at least, *a special enactment of the most extraordinary character was passed, called the Law of Moukābāla*, to which, as it will be prominently referred to at a later stage, special attention should be given. *By it every landholder was allowed to redeem, for ever, one-half of his rent, by paying six years' rent at once, or by certain instalments.* This tax was calculated to produce a present sum of 28,000,000*l.* at the expense in the near future of the permanent reduction of the land revenue by one half. Well might Mr. Cave exclaim, "To the State the arrangement is a ruinous one from a fiscal point of view, inasmuch as the Khedive has thus sacrificed, for all time, 50 per cent. of his land revenue," so that "in 1886 the land-tax will fall from 4,300,000*l.* to 2,600,000*l.*"⁵ However, the expedient, though desperate for the State, produced

⁴ Ibid. p. 10.

⁵ Ibid. p. 5.

¹ Parliamentary Papers
1425 of 1876, p. 8.

² Parliamentary Papers
1484 of 1876, p. 53.

³ Parliamentary Papers
1425 of 1876, p. 5.

from 1872 to 1875 the amount of about 12,000,000*l.*,¹ which was duly paid to the Bondholders.² It had also this other advantage. It was, as Mr. Cave pointed out, *clearly* “most advantageous to the landowner,” as he thereby “secured an indefeasible title to his land,” and “as the Khedive has bound himself in the most solemn manner not to re-impose the redeemed moiety of the tax, in any way whatever.”³

But the worst fact in Mr. Cave's Report has yet to be given. He had to record that, with the exception of one small item, *all the money produced by the Loans had been absolutely lost*. After clearly demonstrating, from the accounts, that *all the works of utility in the State had been constructed out of its own revenues, and not out of the proceeds of the Loans*, he says :—“For the present large amount of indebtedness *there is absolutely nothing to show but the Suez Canal*” (costing 16,000,000*l.*), “*the whole proceeds of the Loans and Floating Debt having been absorbed in payment of interest and sinking funds, with the exception of the sum debited to that great work.*”⁴

⁴ Ibid. p. 8.

As the people of Egypt had thus “absolutely nothing to show” for all those debts, *the mere annual interest of which (at rates varying from 12 to 26 per cent. per annum on the vanished proceeds) was consuming nearly 70 per cent. of their gross revenues*, it might have been supposed that Mr. Cave would have advised some reduction of the rate of interest. But he gave no such advice. The only measure of relief he suggested was a slight diminution in the incidence of the sinking funds, by postponing the due dates of the different loans from 1892 to 1926.⁵ In return for this trifling concession, Egypt was asked to surrender herself and her revenues, bound hand and foot, into the hands of a European Control Department, whose business would be “to secure the punctual payment of the Debt Charges.”⁶

⁵ Ibid. p. 11.

⁶ Ibid. p. 11.

It must in all frankness be noted that, at the first view, the proposal for the appointment of an English official, with any power or temptation thus to interfere in the affairs of Egypt, was distasteful to Her Majesty's Government. There was evidently present in Lord Derby's mind a fear that such an arrangement might be perverted

or misused by the official nominated, so as, in the long-run, to embroil his Government with Egypt, or with one or other of the European Powers. The hesitation was natural; for the French Foreign Minister had recently, as a parallel and an encouragement, indiscreetly pointed to the case of Tunis,¹ where, "under circumstances very similar" the establishment of "a Joint Commission under the auspices of France, England, and Italy" had resulted in intrigues against the power of the Bey of Tunis, which, as events have since proved, promised little for the peace of that country.

¹ Parliamentary Papers
1484 of 1876, p. 1.

Our Government accordingly refused in emphatic terms to agree to the first proposal, which was the outcome of Mr. Cave's mission, namely, that "an International Commission" should be appointed for Egypt, having "an avowed right to the support of the English and French Governments."² *They did what was, however, as events turned out, very much worse, when they proceeded, under pressure from the British Consul-General and the Bondholders, to lend to the Khedive, as his servants, certain of their own highly-placed public functionaries, owing no responsibility to the British Nation, nor indeed to any one, "for the reorganization of his financial administration."*³

² Ibid. p. 1.

The first British functionary thus lent to the Khedive was Mr. Rivers Wilson, who arrived in Cairo on 16th March, 1876. Simultaneously with his arrival, additional pecuniary claims had been urged on His Highness, which had raised the nominal amount of the Egyptian debt to 91,000,000*l.*⁴ To this Lord Derby did not fail himself to add a sum of 12,000,000*l.*,⁵ being the amount then due to the landholders, who, as already shown, had paid at least that sum in redemption of the half of their land-tax, on the faith of most solemn pledges, *which pledges, he held, the Khedive had no right to break.*⁶ In the result, Mr. Rivers Wilson was recalled to his English post, on the ground that, owing to the crushing magnitude of the claims for interest, every scheme which had been proposed for liquidation was too onerous for Egypt to bear.

³ Ibid. p. 2.

⁴ Ibid. p. 78.

⁵ Ibid. p. 78.

⁶ Ibid. p. 79.

The pressure that Lord Derby declined to bring to bear

officially on the Egyptian Government might, however, be secured by "unofficial" means, equally based on a misapplication of the power and influence of the British nation. A hint to our Consul-General would no doubt enable him to intimidate the Khedive *verbally*, quite as effectively as Lord Derby could *in writing*. Accordingly, Messrs. Fruhlings and Goschen called on Earl Derby to "urge on General Stanton (then Consul-General at Cairo) to support their protest."¹ The example of these gentlemen was followed by the London Council of Foreign Bondholders and others. In every case the assurance was given, by way of reply, *that the British Consul-General would be instructed to grant*

¹ Parliamentary Papers
1484 of 1876, p. 57.

² Ibid. pp. 68 and 77. "*such unofficial assistance as he properly could.*"²

The next care naturally was to see that this "unofficial assistance" took, as nearly as might be, the form of an official mandate. The measure of official authority possessed by any personal mission from the Bondholders to the Khedive would naturally be judged of according to the *political rank* of the gentlemen who might form it. Messrs. Goschen and Joubert went to Egypt in October, 1876, *avowedly at the request of "2000 holders of Egyptian Stock;"*³ yet by the 27th of that month our Consul-

³ Parliamentary Papers
2233 of 1879, p. 7.

⁴ Ibid. p. 11.

⁵ Ibid. p. 11.

General was urging on the Khedive that these two gentlemen "had come at the Khedive's express invitation,"⁴ and that he must "look on them as his best friends."⁵ Notwithstanding that Mr. Goschen had himself been the Contractor for the two first Loans, and, as such, might be supposed to be somewhat biassed in favour of the claims of the Bondholders, "whose interests" he had plainly avowed to our officials that "he represented," he was recommended rather as a judge over the Khedive than as a suitor before him; for the latter was assured by our Consul-General that Mr. Goschen "*would hold the scales evenly.*"⁶ A threat was likewise held out, in case no settlement should be come to, in the words—"I pointed out *that it was impossible that a state of affairs could continue* which was bringing ruin on the country and its creditors."⁷ By direct request of Lord Derby, moreover, our Consul-General carefully im-

⁶ Ibid. p. 11.

⁷ Ibid. p. 11.

pressed on the mind of the Khedive "*that Mr. Goschen was a Member of the late Cabinet,*" and "*is a person of high position and reputation in this country.*"¹

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2233 of 1879, p. 10.

The first act of the "Member of the late Cabinet" sufficiently evinced the extent to which "unofficial assistance" was at his command. Ismael Sadyk Pasha, Minister of Finance, was then "the most powerful, and certainly the most wealthy, man in Egypt."² He was however opposed to the wishes of Mr. Goschen, who "refused from the first to treat with him." On 10th November, 1876, after having been boycotted for fifteen days by Mr. Goschen, the Pasha was arrested on a charge of "fostering agitation in the provinces," and "conspiring against the Viceroy, whom he accused of *plundering the country in concert with Europeans.*"³ He was tried the following day by the Council of Ministers, "found guilty, *probably unheard in his own defence,* sentenced to exile for life, and immediately sent off to the White Nile,"⁴ "a sentence which," our Consul-General elsewhere admits, "is equivalent to death, as few prisoners ever return from the White Nile."⁵ Verily, "unofficial assistance" simplified matters for the Bondholders much more promptly than official assistance could have done. The effect is exultingly recorded on the same day by our Consul-General as follows:—"The chances of the success of Messrs. Goschen and Joubert's mission, which, owing to the hostile influence and intrigues of the late Minister of Finance, for some days looked doubtful, have palpably improved with the fall of that Minister."⁶ By the 18th of

² Ibid. p. 20.

³ Ibid. p. 20.

⁴ Ibid. p. 21.

⁵ Parliamentary Papers
3249 of 1882, p. 103.

⁶ Parliamentary Papers
3233, of 1879, p. 21.

cheating the landholders out of the annual reductions of rent to which they were entitled under the law of Moukābāla, while continuing to collect from them and pay over to the Bondholders the advance revenues for which the annual reductions

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2233 of 1879, pp. 22
and 28.

*formed the sole consideration.*¹ A separate Treasury had already been established under European control, to receive the hypothecated revenues. The balance could hardly be said to have been "held evenly," as, in return for these vast concessions, no mention was made of reducing the claims for yearly interest which were crushing the State. The British Government were asked to appoint an Official Commissioner and a Comptroller over this separate Treasury, but they declined;² and the Bondholders seemed quite satisfied with the "unofficial assistance" thus proffered them with no niggard hand. Obviously the experience they had gained proved that irresponsible Europeans, paid by the Egyptian State, but "unofficially assisted" with all the influence, both in the shape of promises and threats, that a Consul-General could command, would suit their purpose much better than Comptrollers acting on the direct responsibility of the British Government. The first Coupon, payable on the 15th of January, 1877, amounting to 2,301,000*l.*, was duly met. Our Consul-General did not disguise his knowledge of the oppressive means employed to raise the amount, for he wrote, "*that, under the extreme pressure put upon the authorities, the taxes are being collected in some districts for six months in advance.*"³ The European Comptrollers could clearly use any kind of "extreme pressure on the authorities" that they pleased. They were the paid servants of the Egyptian Government, and answerable only to it. *The Consul-General* was not responsible, having only given them "unofficial assistance."

² Ibid. p. 38.

³ Ibid. p. 47.

"The cry was, 'Still they come.'" On 2nd March, 1877, a batch of Europeans arrived, always purporting to be appointed at His Highness's urgent request, but really under the "unofficial" application of the official screw.

The dignity of the antecedents of these gentlemen was invariably impressed on the Khedive's mind. The salaries of this batch alone amounted to 33,500*l.* a year.¹

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2233 of 1879, p. 59.

Meanwhile fresh claimants on the Treasury appeared, whose rights were duly urged on the Khedive. The Anglo-Egyptian Bank, representing the capital (1,600,000*l.*) of "2,500 British subjects,"² pressed a claim for 640,000*l.* Our Consul-General replied, "that he was fully aware of the claim, and had lost no opportunity of urging upon the Egyptian Government the necessity of coming to some general arrangement with all classes of its creditors."³

² Ibid. p. 60.

³ Ibid. p. 66.

The 15th July was by this time ominously near, when another sum, amounting to 2,074,975*l.*, must be handed over to meet the Coupon due on that day. The Khedive urged that he had no money, and did not know where to turn for it. "*While pleading the utter want of resources, he frankly admitted*" to our Consul-General "*that, in order to pay the Coupon, the taxes were being collected for nine months, and in some places even for a year in advance.*"⁴ Sternly he was threatened that, were there to be any failure, he would be "courting a serious danger."⁵ In vain he protested that "*he had already given up everything to the Bondholders, and that he saw no possibility of offering creditors better terms without ruining his country, which was already overburdened.*"⁶ The Consul-General, in reply, made short work of the Khedive's *pro humanitatis causâ* argument, so skilfully employed by his own successors at a later stage, as an excuse for the creation of more and more British appointments. He at once silenced the Prince's lamentations over the woes of his subjects, by emphatically declaring "*that the creditors ought not to suffer for a deplorable state of things for which they were in no way responsible!*"⁷

⁴ Ibid. p. 70.

⁵ Ibid. p. 71.

⁶ Ibid. p. 71.

⁷ Ibid. p. 71.

By extraordinary efforts and pressure, the Coupon of the 15th of July was duly paid, and our much mollified Consul-General found time and inclination to bestow a thought on the admitted fact that the measures necessary to secure its payment had inflicted untold miseries on millions of his

fellow-creatures. He accordingly wrote to his Government, on 12th July, 1877, as follows:—"The money required (2,074,975*l.*) was fully paid up yesterday. *But I fear that these results may have been achieved at the expense of ruinous sacrifices to the peasantry, by forced sales of growing crops, and by collecting the taxes in advance. All this must be wrung, IN SOME SHAPE OR OTHER, from a country already crushed by taxation.* Meanwhile, I fear the European Administration may be unconsciously sanctioning the utter ruin of the peasant-creators of the wealth of the country; for which I hold that *Englishmen are incurring a serious responsibility.*"¹

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2233 of 1879, pp. 72
and 73.

Threatened with nameless evils if he failed to pay, and almost at his wit's end for the means of doing so, the Khedive now determined to put the good faith and honesty of his European masters to a crucial test. It was notorious that of the 100,000 Europeans in Egypt, none made any contribution to the Revenue, while multitudes were reaping fortunes by systematically destroying the sources of revenue that existed, by smuggling. On 30th July, 1877, our Consul-General himself reported to his Government that "the revenues of Egypt might be greatly increased, without imposing further sacrifices upon the already over-taxed cultivators, *by correcting abuses connected with smuggling by Europeans, and compelling them to contribute fairly towards the resources of the country.*"² He urged that, "as regards the Customs, the falling off no doubt arises partly from the smuggling that is being carried on *upon a very large scale by Europeans;*" that their vessels, "notoriously full of contraband goods, may lie off the coast for days," and yet be "exempted from visit or search; and *if once they succeed in landing their goods and storing them in the house of some European, woe betide the authorities if they dare to touch them.*"³ Our Consul-General adds: "*The country is full of contraband goods thus imported, which are openly sold under the eye of the authorities, who are powerless to interfere.*"⁴ Mr. Vivian concludes as follows:—"All these crying abuses little

² Ibid. p. 77.

³ Ibid. p. 77.

⁴ Ibid. p. 77.

concern the governing classes here.* *If they are imposed upon by Europeans, they mercilessly exact more than the equivalent from the native fellah, who, patient and hard-working as he is, alone bears the whole burden, and pays all the penalty, without having any one to plead for him.*"¹ Two months later the Khedive implored our Consul-General to correct these abuses, "to obtain from Europeans the taxes which they ought to pay," and "to check the enormous contraband trade which is carried on with impunity;" and entreated "*that Her Majesty's Government would give him a helping hand.*"²

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2233 of 1873, p. 77.

² Ibid. p. 94.

It proved to be mere waste of time for either our Consul-General or the Khedive to urge any such just claims on Her Majesty's Government. Mr. Vivian's letter was not replied to at all till seven months afterwards, and then a cynical answer, dated 4th March, 1878, came as follows:—"It appears to their Lordships [of Her Majesty's Treasury] that this appeal on the part of the Khedive *cannot be altogether disregarded* by Her Majesty's Government, especially in the circumstances of the present disordered condition of the Egyptian finances,³ and the Khedive might get an assurance of their willingness to assist him in the suppression of the abuses by the European population;" but only "*provided His Highness gives satisfactory evidence of his serious intention to reform his financial administration, and can assure them that the decisions of the Tribunals will be respected.*"⁴ This reply practically gave *carte blanche* to the foreigners to continue their malpractices. The decisions of the Tribunals were necessarily in abeyance in consequence of the money which should have satisfied them being all appropriated to meet the Coupons. The condition attached was thus an impossible one; while the attaching of it was obviously designed to turn the very abuses of our own countrymen into an additional weapon to coerce the Khedive to provide for the Bondholders from other sources, at any cost, and at all hazards.

³ Ibid. p. 155.

⁴ Ibid. pp. 157 and 158.

* The governing classes alluded to are not Egyptians, but Turks and Circassians.

The Khedive now began clearly to realize that there was no intention of allowing him to stop payment of the interest payable to the Bondholders, or even to moderate its exorbitant rate, so long as the full amount could be squeezed, "IN SOME SHAPE OR OTHER," out of his unfortunate people. The inundation of the Nile had partly failed in 1877, and in the month of September he saw himself within measurable distance of the dreaded due date of the next Coupon, with no legitimate means to meet it. Attempting to take our Consul-General into his confidence, in order, if possible, to enlist his sympathies, he disclosed the history of how the last Coupon had been met, namely, by forcibly collecting the taxes for the succeeding year. He declared that "*this ruinous expedient had to be resorted to for each Coupon,*" and that consequently "the payment of the Coupon of the 15th January next (if it could be met in full) *would eat up the greater portion of the taxes of 1878.*"¹ He added his conviction that these efforts were "exhausting the country." Nevertheless, "Egypt would meanwhile struggle on to meet her engagements as long as she could, *at whatever sacrifice.*" But he solemnly warned our Consul-General that while "he intended honourably to maintain his Decree" (which had sanctioned the Goschen-Joubert scheme) "*he foresaw that the time would come when Egypt might find the burden beyond her strength.*"²

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2233 of 1879, p. 87.

² Ibid. p. 87.

Our Consul-General was himself well aware of the truth of these representations. Indeed, he wrote the same day to his own Government adopting similar views, declaring that "the taxes were being taken in advance, that the Coupons were being paid *with great difficulty, shifts, and sacrifices,*" and "that reports had reached him *that the peasantry were crushed with taxation.*"³ He had already on the occasion of the preparations to pay the July Coupon reported to his Government, that "the peasants are cruelly treated, *to extract the taxes from them.*"⁴

³ Ibid. p. 87.

⁴ Ibid. p. 69.

It might at least reasonably have been hoped, on the mere ground of common humanity, that our Consul-General, after hearing such a recital of the woes of the Egyptian

people, would have avoided further threatening the Khedive with such penalties, in case of default, as would inevitably force him to sanction still more oppressive measures. Not so. He told Lord Derby that the people were already suffering from starvation and torture in consequence of the pressure exercised on them for payment of the Coupons; but he at the same time solemnly charged the Prince, by his very instinct of self-preservation, not even to seek a reduction of the interest, but to continue cash payments in full, at all costs. "I reminded His Highness," he wrote, "*that any change or revision of the solemn engagements he had so lately contracted would be most dangerous.*"¹

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2233 of 1879, p. 78.

The only suggestion which our Consul-General deigned to offer was that another brand-new Commission of Inquiry should be appointed at the instance of the creditors, with full powers for a "thorough and searching" examination, "extending to both *expenditure* and revenue," and that "it should suggest means of acquiring *stronger control* in the provinces over the collection and payment of the taxes."² A very intelligible hint was also thrown out that, if the efforts of the Commission did not succeed in providing adequate funds, by annexing sources of revenue hitherto unappropriated, by reducing the expenditure of the already starved Civil Government of Egypt, *and by reducing the army*, the Khedive would be required to divest himself of that portion of his private estates which had escaped the grasp of the Goschen Commissioners.

² Ibid. p. 88.

It was to be expected that the Khedive would look with something akin to dismay on this proposal for appointing a fresh Commission, more especially as it was not disguised that whatever revenues might be forthcoming, as the result of its labours in further taxing his subjects, starving the Administration and the army, or confiscating his own property, were to be poured into the lap of the Foreign Bondholders. Even the amounts saved by "correcting abuses," that is by diverting to the Treasury the illicit gains of the Egyptian revenue collectors, were destined, it was admitted, to go into the same yawning

receptacle. The Khedive accordingly made a firm stand against the Commission, and in favour of his countrymen. He had no objection to a revision of the revenue *receipts*, but he stoutly objected to give powers to curtail the *expenditure* on the already dwarfed and crippled departments of the State, "which," he was informed, "the Commissioners insist on examining into the possibility of reducing."¹ The Europeans already in office, while punctually drawing their own huge stipends, and duly paying the Bondholders, had not paid anybody else; and he submitted that he could see no advantage in charging the State with any more gigantic European salaries, when the existing "European heads of departments had only succeeded in showing a large deficit upon the balance sheet of their native predecessors."²

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2233 of 1879, p. 97.

² Ibid. p. 87.

The threats of nameless disaster uttered by our Consul-General in case the next Coupon was not met, and the dread of a new Commission on his affairs, had the natural effect. Increased efforts were made to extort money from the peasantry. On 19th September, 1877, our Consul-General reported that he was aware that "the necessity had been forced upon the Government from the very first of resorting to the ruinous expedient of taking the taxes in advance to meet the Coupons;"³ that the land tax had not come in well in Upper Egypt, because that province "is unquestionably charged beyond its powers;" that there was left "*less than nothing for the expenses of the Government, including the pay of the employes already heavily in arrear,*" and that "*a collapse was impending.*"⁴

³ Ibid. p. 93.

⁴ Ibid. p. 93.

At this period the first germs of a national feeling against the ruin of the country for the benefit of the foreigner became visible, though the movement did not take a political character till eighteen months later. In his straits the Khedive had, besides endeavouring to raise revenue, been compelled to cease paying the native servants of the State. On 30th November, 1877, our Consul-General reported as follows:—"The Treasury chest is empty; the troops and Government employes are many

months in arrears of pay, and among the latter class *the greatest distress and misery prevail*. The whole administration of the country is at a dead lock." He then significantly added, "*The Khedive's own people murmur at the payment in full of the Bondholders, while his own employés, the most essential part of the administrative machine, are left unpaid.*"¹ With insufferable hypocrisy, these facts—all the obvious results of foreign spoliation—were urged as crimes against the Khedive, for which he was to be held personally responsible. The wretched monarch repelled the charge by complaining that our Comptrollers had not allowed him to collect land revenue in advance from those who could pay, *and warning them that "those in arrear for the present year are the poorer class of the peasantry, FROM WHOM THE TAXES CAN ONLY BE WRUNG BY SALE OF THEIR LANDS AND CATTLE."*²

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2233 of 1879, p. 97.

² Ibid. p. 103.

On 8th February, 1878, the English Comptroller sent in his Report on the state of the country for the previous year. He described its woeful condition consequent on the failure of the Nile water, whereby much of the land had gone out of cultivation; *how the inhabitants were almost starving*; how the land tax was so high as to be a rack-rent, while the poll tax, levied on every male over 12 years old, had been doubled, and most people thereby reduced to poverty. The tax on professions and trades had also been *quadrupled*.³

³ Ibid. p. 137.

Nor was the distress a matter for wonder, nor its cause difficult to trace, seeing that our own European officers of the Ministry of Finance had just rendered a statement showing *that, out of a revenue of 9,543,000l. for 1877, no less than 7,473,000l. had been taken by the Bondholders, leaving, after the necessary payment of 1,000,000l. as tribute and interest on Suez Canal shares, "only 1,070,000l. for the necessary expenses of the Government"!!!*⁴

⁴ Ibid. p. 113.

The mass of the employés of the Government were powerless under their wrongs, and starved in silence; but an enterprising European employé about this time endeavoured to create a diversion in their favour, which greatly alarmed our

Consul-General, who, whether “unofficially” or otherwise, was now openly acting as the Bondholders’ advocate. A certain Mr. Keller sued the Government in the Mixed Court at Cairo for seven months’ arrears of wages due to him, besides damages, and having obtained a decree, seized the Treasury Chest in order to pay himself.¹ The incident had in it a genuine touch of humour; but it was no laughing matter to the Consul-General. *Other starving employés might follow suit*, and large amounts of the revenue might thereby be secured by persons other than the Bondholders. The Consul-General could not contemplate with equanimity the spectacle of even a starving employé getting his wages so long as a Bondholder had a claim. On 13th December, 1877, he wrote to Lord Derby, greatly alarmed, announcing the mishap, hoping that the decision might prove wrong in law, and be reversed on appeal, and warning Her Majesty’s Government that “*if confirmed, it must materially weaken the force of the Decrees which protect the Bondholders.*”²

¹ Parliamentary Papers 2233 of 1879, pp. 100 and 111.

² Ibid. p. 100.

Most probably measures were immediately taken to prevent the Courts from entertaining fresh suits by employés for arrears, as no others are recorded, and as it is certain that the arrears in general were not liquidated. Four months later, our Consul-General commented on “the heavy arrears of pay due to the employés of the Government, *many of whom are literally starving,*”³ and averred that “the non-payment of these poor people is causing *intense suffering and misery.*”⁴ He enclosed for Lord Salisbury’s perusal a letter from an English schoolmaster (which he said was only one of many that he had received). The writer declared that his pay was nine months in arrear, and that he had not a penny left, adding, “*I have remained since last Tuesday at 6 p.m. till yesterday evening at the same hour, without putting a morsel of bread into my mouth.*”⁵

³ Ibid. p. 196.

⁴ Ibid. p. 196.

⁵ Ibid. p. 197.

The Khedive also came forward to urge that the starving employés should be paid in preference to the May Coupon, as *both* could not be attended to. “The tribute,” pleaded he, “and the pay of the Government

employés are heavily in arrear, and Egypt is expected to pay the next Coupon. *It will be utterly impossible to meet all these engagements together.*"¹ He pleaded in vain. While the State Treasury was empty, and its servants starving for want of a hundred thousand pounds, or so, the separate "Treasury of the Debt," under the key of the European Comptrollers, was possessed of *millions*. What must the starvelings have felt as they learned this? Were there no seeds of national hate implanted with such knowledge? The Khedive had begged and prayed of our officers that they would "make a personal inspection of the provinces," to see for themselves the ruin wrought, *but they declined to do so.*² Then was the time they might have acquired a moral right to use the *pro humanitatis causâ* argument. But they wholly failed to do so, though a year later, with consummate hypocrisy, they put it forward as a ground for creating new posts of emolument and power for themselves, under pretence of a burning desire to free the land from oppression.

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2233 of 1879, p. 194.

² Ibid. p. 87.

*With all these facts before him, Lord Salisbury, by a letter dated 16th April, 1878, of which an extract only is published in the Blue Book, DECIDED TO URGE PAYMENT OF THE COUPON, IN PREFERENCE BOTH TO THE JUDGMENT-CREDITORS AND THE STARVING EMPLOYEES.*³

³ Ibid. p. 194.

On 18th April, 1878, our Consul-General duly communicated this decision to the Khedive, "urging upon him the necessity of *doing his utmost* to meet the May Coupon, and *strongly advising him to make every personal sacrifice to do so.*"⁴ It is useless now to speculate as to what the Khedive must have thought of the religion, or the honour, or even the common humanity of his European masters, as he replied, "that the large deficit of about 1,200,000*l.* could not be covered without ruinous sacrifices;"⁵ but "*that, as the English and French Governments required that the Coupon should be paid, he would do all that lay in his power to meet it, AT WHATEVER COST TO THE COUNTRY; BUT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONSEQUENCES WOULD NOT REST WITH HIM.*"⁶

⁴ Ibid. p. 198.

⁵ Ibid. p. 198.

⁶ Ibid. p. 198.

Our Consul-General exultingly telegraphed twelve days later,—“ THE COUPON, AMOUNTING TO A LITTLE OVER 2,000,000*l.* STERLING, WAS PAID ON THE 1ST INSTANT, WHEN IT FELL DUE.”¹

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2233 of 1879, p. 200.

Since the decision of the Courts in favour of the Government employé, the appointment of the projected Commission, with unlimited powers, had appeared to the European Comptrollers and to our “unofficially assisting” Consul-General more urgent than ever, in the paramount interests of the Bondholders: while, on the other hand, its hostile designs towards the further curtailment of expenditure on the Administration had become more evident to the Khedive, from the fact that *our officials refused to admit any Native representative into its deliberations*. The Khedive urged that “in a serious inquiry, which would vitally affect his country’s interests, the native voice should not be entirely ignored;”² and “the Commissioners,” as our Consul-General insisted on calling them, although at that time none were appointed, showed at one time an inclination to concede the point, being well aware that whatever native was appointed, would find himself hopelessly outvoted. As regards the unlimited powers of the Commission, however, the European officials were inexorable. The Khedive also stood firm.

² Ibid. p. 97.

The only way that now seemed likely to drive the Khedive from his opposition was to run him into still direr straits. Completely unable, as has been seen, even to pay its own monthly servants, the Government was unable to meet the claims of certain European creditors, for supplies furnished to the War Department. A wrangling interview followed, during which the Khedive was told by our Consul-General that he appeared to be trying to “shelter himself behind the European Control,” while really “repudiating all his engagements and liabilities;”³ that he had been guilty of “a flagrant breach of faith,” and that his conduct in not paying this debt “*implied a repudiation of all the duties and responsibilities of a regular Government;*” that “such a state of things *could not continue,*” and that “*the limits of forbearance were being approached.*”⁴

³ Ibid. p. 98.

⁴ Ibid. pp. 98 and 99.

Notwithstanding this unseemly and cowardly scolding,

the Khedive did not as yet give in. On the contrary, he had the temerity to commit an act of insubordination to his own paid Comptrollers, venturing for once, much to their astonishment, to treat them as "mere servants of Egypt," as our Consul-General had so often called them when wishing to make him responsible for their acts. He published a Decree, dated 27th January, 1878, appointing the Commission, with powers to examine into the Revenue, but *not* into the Expenditure.¹ This act of independence gave the Comptrollers the excuse they had been seeking, to throw off all form of respect for his commands or his kingly dignity. They had the Mixed Courts at their back, really prohibited by their constitution from trying cases affecting Administrative acts. But by an abuse of their process (which in some mysterious sense they held to be legally superior to the Egyptian Government itself) these high-handed Comptrollers endeavoured to *force* the Khedive to give them that access to the State expenditure which his Decree had denied them, *by indicting his son, Prince Hassein, the Minister of Finance, before these Tribunals, to compel him to account for "the sums received, and the manner in which they have been dealt with."*² A copy of the indictment was duly forwarded by our Consul-General to Lord Derby.³

¹ Parliamentary Papers 2233 of 1879, p. 129.

² Ibid. p. 125.

³ Ibid. p. 130.

The Comptrollers possessed another weapon of coercion, albeit a very invidious one. The Khedive's own creditors, like all other claimants, had been left unpaid in favour of the Bondholders, and a large number of them, encouraged by the attitude of the Comptrollers, had taken out decrees against him in the Mixed Courts. All the Consuls-General served on the Khedive, on 28th March, 1878, a Note of remonstrance against the non-execution, by himself and against himself, of the decrees of these Courts. The Note alleged that the non-satisfaction of the decrees "*constituted an infraction of International Conventions,*"⁴ and was thus of the nature of an insult to United Europe. No wonder that, as our Consul-General records, "*the Note made a strong impression on the Khedive,*" though he felt compelled to ask "*what was meant by it,*" as "*financial*

⁴ Ibid. p. 190.

*difficulties alone prevented him from meeting these sentences,"*¹ and he added that "*he could hardly be expected to satisfy both his judgment-debts and the claims of the Bondholders.*"²

¹ Parliamentary Papers 2233 of 1879, p. 193.

² Ibid. p. 189.

All the marvels of coercion effected by our Consul-General up to 19th December, 1877, had been the result of "unofficial assistance" only. The distinction may seem feint and subtle, but that officer considered it very real; for on 30th November he strongly urged on Lord Derby that all he had hitherto done in intimidating the Khedive had been "*entirely unofficial.*"³ He felt, however, that something more was needful, in order to compel him to give the Commission that complete control over the spending departments which it wanted; and, accordingly, he thrice applied for powers to use "*official pressure,*" which, he averred, "*would have the greatest weight and authority with His Highness.*"⁴

³ Ibid. p. 97.

⁴ Ibid. pp. 97, 99, and 103.

THE REQUEST WAS GRANTED BY A LETTER, DATED 27TH DECEMBER, 1877, AND A STILL STRONGER ONE, DATED 8TH MARCH, 1878; AND HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT, AND THE BRITISH NATION, AT LAST STOOD FORTH BEFORE THE WORLD AS OFFICIALLY—what their representatives in Egypt had all along been actually,—THE CHAMPIONS OF THE EXTORTIONS OF THE BONDHOLDERS UPON THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE.⁵

⁵ Ibid. pp. 104 and 160.

Having secured permission to act in name of the British Nation, our Consul-General lost no time in taking full advantage of it. On the morning of the very next day he assumed towards the already perplexed and quaking monarch the truculent tone which he considered that the strength of his own Government, and the weakness of the Egyptian State, entitled him to employ. He told the Prince that "*Her Majesty's Government* had hitherto refrained from embarrassing him," but that now, unless something was settled, "*they could not refrain from themselves pressing just claims,*" that "*patience and moderation had its limits,*" and—here followed the admission that all this display of National indignation was solely in order to get at new sources of revenue for the Bondholders,—"*that it was absolutely necessary that the Commission should examine the expenditure of the Government.*"⁶ For more than two months the Khedive resisted

⁶ Ibid. p. 109.

this proposal, which he well knew was only a device further to cripple the Native Administration in favour of the Foreign claimants, by a Commission composed solely of the representatives of the latter. The design, he well knew, was *not* to reduce the rate of interest on the Debt, but to annex new sources of Revenue. Colonel Stanley plainly avowed this on 4th February, 1878, when he wrote that *the object of the inquiry was to prevent the Khedive from "concealing and understating some branches of the revenue," and so making the Commission "an instrument for justifying any plan for reducing the interest of the Debt."*¹ In the same letter he pointed out that, without doing this, additional resources might be secured by leasing out and *raising the rents of all the Viceregal lands of Upper Egypt*, a measure by which he points out the Bondholders would be benefited, "because the land, which is the source of all the wealth of Egypt, would become more productive, alike in taxes and in material produce; *while the fellah, above all*" (*whose rent was to be thus raised upon him*), "would have cause for satisfaction, because he would not be liable to forced labour!"²

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2233 of 1879, p. 122.

² Ibid. p. 123.

The Khedive at last offered to concede the full powers desired, to a *Commission of independent Europeans*; but he totally objected to the four Commissioners of the Bondholders sitting in judgment upon him. He begged only for "*an infusion of fresh blood*," complaining that "*the judgment of almost every European official in Egypt had become warped and partial.*"³ A hint was next thrown out as to a joint Note from the Consuls of all Europe being about to be presented. Other less straightforward weapons were also directed against the luckless Khedive. The High Court of Appeal, consisting entirely of European judges, was incited to serve on him a Protest against the non-satisfaction of decrees against the State, resulting from his financial embarrassment. There was no semblance of legal basis for this protest, as the very constitution of the Courts expressly provided, in view of this very contingency, a limitation of their powers, viz., that they "*could not decide concerning the property of the public domain, or suspend the execution of an Administrative measure.*"⁴ Nevertheless, the

³ Ibid. p. 154.

⁴ Parliamentary Papers
186 of 1870, p. 10.

truculence of our Consul-General's communications was reproduced in the tone used by these judges in addressing their Sovereign. "*They could not continue calmly to look at the Government profiting by the limitations to the powers of the Courts to evade the sentences of the tribunals.*"¹ Collaterally with this, sentence was pronounced by the European Tribunals against the Khedive's son, as Minister of Finance, *compelling him to produce the records of Expenditure which, by his father's Decree, he was bound to withhold, and condemning him to pay the whole costs of the action.*²

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2233 of 1879, p. 144.

² Ibid. p. 171.

These combined weapons brought to bear upon the Khedive proved too much for him. Had his country been a first-class Power, he reasoned, he might have been able to withstand the threatened military coalition of all Europe, in defence of his beggared administration, and starving subjects. But Egypt was small and weak; and further resistance he dared not. He yielded; and on 30th March, 1878, a Decree was signed appointing the Commission of Enquiry, consisting of six Europeans, including the four Commissioners of the Debt, to inquire into the "whole financial situation of Egypt."³

³ Ibid. p. 177.

It would be superfluous to adduce further evidence that this Commission, forced on the Khedive by the Powers, and (excepting the salary of its President) paid from the Egyptian Treasury, was appointed solely to secure funds for the Bondholders. There was no pretence that it represented, or would even consider, the wants of the Egyptian Administration or people, except in so far as these were compatible with the prior claim of the foreigner. The very rank of the Europeans forming the Commission was, as on former occasions, used as a means of silencing all opponents. Mr. Rivers Wilson, its President, was not "a Member of the late Cabinet," like Mr. Goschen, but he was known to be a high official of Her Majesty's Government. It was ostentatiously declared that he had merely been granted "leave of absence" for his present task, *and that his expenses were to be paid by the British Government.* The knowledge of this last-named fact, in particular, is recorded by our Consul-General as having "*made a very*

good impression in Egypt,"¹ the impression, of course, being that the British Government would enforce all their official's recommendations. ¹ Parliamentary Papers 2233 of 1879, p. 193.

The Khedive's surrender had been ungracious in its method; and our Officials never forgave him. No consideration or respect was paid to him or his Ministers, if either opposed in the smallest degree the wishes of the Commission. Common decency should have constrained the Europeans, during the progress of so solemn an investigation as that they had undertaken, to prevent any action against the person of the Khedive, and his dignity among his subjects, by those officers of the European Courts whom they had recently been urging to execute decrees against him. Yet our Consul-General reports that in May, 1878, *the Officers of the Court of Reform made "a persistent attempt to seize the furniture in the Khedive's palace for a debt due to a European firm."* He adds, "The incident provoked a great deal of scandal."² The seizure was opposed by the wretched monarch, on the ground that the property "had been sold by His Highness to his family;" but the deed of sale was straightway challenged by the Europeans as fictitious. The Court of Reform agreed with their countrymen, and a second attempt at seizure had to be met by the armed resistance of a sentry.

² Ibid. p. 203.

The next act of this high-handed Commission was to summon "to attend personally before them" Cherif Pasha, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice. He "professed his readiness to give written answers to any questions," but refused to submit to oral examination on "questions requiring great precision."³ The Commission would not yield their point, and added such pressure that he had to resign both portfolios. Whereupon our Consul-General congratulated Lord Salisbury as follows:—"The prestige and authority of the Commission will now be greatly enhanced, by the fall of the most prominent man in Egypt, for disobeying its summons."⁴

³ Ibid. p. 211.

⁴ Ibid. p. 211.

The enhanced prestige of the Commission was soon evidenced, by its capability successfully to coerce the Khedive himself to surrender his own property. Already all his

private estates, covering 485,131 acres, stood mortgaged to his creditors, under the Goschen Commissioners. But he still possessed Crown lands, 431,915 acres, yielding an income of 390,631*l.* Of these, our Consul-General told Lord Salisbury that on 29th June, 1878, he had consented to hand over 288,762 acres, yielding 166,986*l.*, and to retain 143,153 acres, yielding 223,645*l.* The only comment that our Consul-General made on this act of self-sacrifice was that, as the land surrendered yielded a smaller amount of rent per acre than that retained—"The Khedive thus evidently retains the best lands."¹ He had, however, a word to say in laudation of a Commission who had so well succeeded in annexing another large slice of the revenue. "*The Commission*," said he, "*have achieved extraordinary results in the short time they have been here, results such as a year ago it would have seemed absurd to expect.*"²

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2233 of 1879, p. 218.

² Ibid. p. 218.

It soon appeared that the Khedive was not to be allowed long to enjoy even the small remainder of his personal estates which had been exempted from the above surrender. The November Coupon of 2,000,000*l.* had to be provided for; and there was "a gloomy estimate"³ as to how it was to be met. To strip the Sovereign of his remaining possessions seemed the shortest road to a settlement. Accordingly the Commission in their Report, dated two months after the June surrender, declared that they "held the Chief of the State personally responsible for the deficits."⁴ They decreed "the limitation of the absolute power the Khedive had hitherto wielded," and concluded by stripping both him and his family of all their remaining property, both in lands and houses, in exchange for "a Civil List suitable to his position."⁵ Powerless to resist, the Khedive agreed to this last surrender, so galling to the pride of an Eastern Sovereign. Mr. Rivers Wilson, the President, was, as our Consul-General informs his Government, the member of the Commission who was most bent on thus completely prostrating the dignity and power of the Khedive, having "insisted very firmly upon the restitution of the whole of the Viceregal family properties to the State,"⁶ and "refused to listen to any compromise upon the point."⁷ The Sovereign

³ Ibid. p. 226.

⁴ Ibid. p. 230.

⁵ Ibid. p. 233.

⁶ Ibid. p. 236.

⁷ Ibid. p. 237.

is represented as, by way of return, at once applying for Mr. Rivers Wilson to be his Finance Minister!¹ Mr. Wilson accepted the post, on the understanding that he was to exercise "*full and uncontrolled authority over every official under his orders, including the power of appointment and dismissal,*"² not, however, resigning his British appointment as Secretary and Comptroller of the British National Debt, *but merely getting two years' leave of absence without pay.* The French Comptroller at the same time took a seat in the Cabinet as Minister of Public Works.³

¹ Parliamentary Papers 2233 of 1879, p. 287.

² Ibid. p. 286.

³ Ibid. p. 298.

The all-important change in the constitution, demanded in the Report of the Commission, namely, "*the limitation of the absolute power which the Khedive had hitherto wielded,*"⁴ was formally carried into effect by a document executed by him, called THE RESCRIPT OF 28TH AUGUST, 1878, which AFFIRMED THE PRINCIPLE OF MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY.⁵ On this document, *which pledged the Khedive never to act in opposition to his Ministry,* our officials then laid great stress, believing, no doubt, that they had, for all time, effected a complete *coup d'état* in favour of themselves and the Bondholders, their clients, by two of their number having vaulted into seats in the Egyptian Cabinet; and it will be noted to their shame, that, at a later date, after the National movement had begun to force its way into the Ministry itself, they ill-used and finally deposed the Khedive for continuing to act under the very Rescript to which they had pledged him.

⁴ Ibid. p. 230.

⁵ Ibid. p. 288.

For the time, however, the two European Members of the Egyptian Cabinet, supported by the whole influence of their respective Governments, had secured the position of veritable Dictators of Egypt, in the interests of the Bondholders; and they and their backers, the Consuls-General, thereupon at once seized the opportunity thus afforded for satisfying their lust of patronage and place at the expense of the Native races, but, of course, solely from a burning desire to save the latter from oppression. It is so inherent in the British official to consider that the happiness of another race can only be secured by the application to them of his own forms and regulations, however unsuitable to their wants, and by

the appointment of his brothers and nephews to every post of preferment. Messrs. Wilson and Blignières had hardly taken their seats, when the process of dismissing the old native servants of the State, and substituting Europeans, was begun. On 25th August, 1878, our Consul-General thus announced the intention to his Government—“*The old leaven of useless and corrupt officials will be weeded out as quickly as possible.*”¹ Whatever might be the privations of the discarded servants of the State, the Stock Exchange seemed at all events to be convinced that the new arrangements would be superior to the old in alienating the Egyptian revenues to British and French coffers; for the Consul-General concluded his letter as follows:—“*Egyptian Stock has risen rapidly, since the news of the arrangement became known.*”²

The “weeding out of the old leaven” now began in earnest. In a few months upwards of 500 Native officials were discharged. It is not recorded that compensation or gratuity was granted in a single case. It may be hoped that such was done; though, on the other hand, the claims of the Bondholders were felt to be so urgent, that it was probably held that the Treasury could not afford it. At the beginning of the year 1879 only 744 Europeans were in the pay of the Government of Egypt, and these, it must be remembered, already filled all the offices both in the Courts, Railways, Telegraphs, Port Trusts, &c., where foreigners were naturally required, or had been employed under the Consular Convention of 1870. At the close of 1879, 208 had been added to this number, with salaries aggregating 60,000*l.* a year.³ In 1880, 250 more were appointed, with emoluments amounting to 62,000*l.* a year; and again in 1881, a further batch of 122 Europeans was introduced drawing 26,016*l.* a year. The total number actually receiving pay in March 1882, was 1325; and the total pay was 373,000*l.* a year.⁴ These figures, moreover, take no account of all those Europeans appointed and dismissed during the last four years; nor do they comprise those Europeans who had received from our Comptrollers “*special contracts with the*

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2233 of 1879, p. 289.

² Ibid. p. 289.

³ Parliamentary Papers
3188 of 1882, p. 5.

⁴ Ibid. p. 5.

Egyptian Government." A list of the latter our Consul-General stated on the 13th of that month that he "had not been able to procure," but would "*procure as soon as possible.*"¹ *Has it been procured up to the present time?*

¹ Parliamentary Papers
3188 of 1882, p. 1.

The first duty of the new European Ministers, after securing the punctual payment, monthly, of their own salaries, and comfortable appointments for their fellow-countrymen in lieu of "the old leaven," was to ensure the payment of the November Coupon. It might, indeed, have been expected that, as Ministers of the Egyptian State, they would now feel bound to consider the interests of all the creditors alike, or even to give precedence to the claims of local creditors, who held decrees of the Courts against the Treasury. But they held no such view of their position, and they determined to ignore the judgment creditors in favour of the Bondholders. Their decision caused the former to present a petition to the Consuls-General, protesting against the openly declared intention "again to sacrifice them to the holders of the Unified Debt."²

² Parliamentary Papers
2233 of 1879, p. 313.

The Consular body met, and unanimously decided "*that it was a matter of necessity FOR THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT that the Coupon should be paid.*"³ It was paid, and the holders of the Floating Debt "were sacrificed." No questions were asked as to the state of the people, or how the money was produced. The last of the Khedive's estates had meanwhile been taken from him, and placed in the hands of European Commissioners, who at once arranged to mortgage them to Messrs. Rothschild for 8,500,000*l.*, to be spent on settling part of the Floating Debt, and all of the next Coupon.

³ Ibid. p. 313.

In his despair, the impoverished Prince besought our Officials, if they would not allow him "Compensation for Disturbance," *that they would at least give him the value of his cattle and tools of husbandry which he had left on the estates of which he had been deprived.*⁴ The Prime Minister, Nubar Pasha, assured our Consul-General that the Khedive's plea was a sound one; "that, according to local law, the purchase of land does not carry with it the cattle

⁴ Parliamentary Papers
2397 of 1879, p. 11.

and implements, unless there is a special stipulation to that effect; and that the Khedive is so far justified in his demand." He further admitted, not only that in this case no such special stipulation existed, but *that there was, in fact, a counter-stipulation, that he should retain his movables, and that he (Nubar Pasha) had pledged his word to the Khedive, at the time of the session, "that he would recommend" this stipulation to his colleagues in the Ministry.*¹

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2397 of 1879, p. 11.

Our Consul-General, being assured that Mr. Rivers Wilson, albeit a paid servant of the Egyptian Government, was "*most strongly opposed*"² even to this trifling concession to his princely master, promptly settled the case against the Khedive by the dictum "*that such a claim coming from the Khedive at this moment was both inopportune and highly improper.*"³

² Ibid. p. 11.

The Khedive was now reduced to a mere cipher, destitute of wealth, power, and influence, except in so far as he retained the sympathy of his subjects, under the subversion of his power by his European masters. Such sympathy could not but exist; and the knowledge of it inspired the Europeans with distrust lest the monarch, effaced as he was, might do some secret damage to their schemes of further spoliation, or might attempt to get back some little share of that power of which they had so completely deprived him. The apprehension was probably groundless, as no reasons for entertaining it were adduced; but it was resolved, nevertheless, to rate him soundly, as a cheap precaution, which could do no harm. On 14th October, 1878, our Consul-General accordingly addressed him in solemn tones, warning him "*that a grave responsibility rested with His Highness, for the success or failure of the new scheme. If it were opposed by those in power, or they showed any disposition to discredit it, its difficulties would be enormously increased. That His Highness had still all the prestige and influence of the Chief of an Eastern State; and that any responsibility for failure would involve its authors—WHOEVER THEY MIGHT BE—in the disastrous consequences that must result therefrom.*"⁴

⁴ Ibid. p. 3.

It takes much to surprise an Eastern potentate out of the calm courtesies of ceremonial intercourse. A Comptroller may hector; a Consul-General may threaten; but the Prince will cling fast to that amenity of tone and control of temper which he thinks indispensably becoming to his own dignity. But the Khedive's equanimity was now severely tried. As he ran over, one by one, the items of the account between himself and his foreign taskmasters, it became impossible for him to control his emotion. Stripped of his ancestral power; his Treasury bankrupt; his subjects starving, and shrieking under the lash that wrung from them their hard-earned crust, only to be handed over to the merciless grasp of the foreigner! Despoiled of his inheritance; his privy purse emptied; his very cattle and ploughs confiscated; his furniture only withheld from seizure by eluding the bailiff's watchfulness—he was now to be held liable by his persecutors for the results of their conduct, just as if he had remained on the very pinnacle of power! He turned on the Consul-General, “much agitated,” and “with evident signs of great annoyance,” cried,—

“The responsibility you seek to cast on me is neither logical nor just. What is my present position in Egypt? I have surrendered my personal property, and my personal power; and my ministers, and not I, must be responsible. Formerly your Government showed good will towards myself and my dynasty; but now it seems as if they had taken up an attitude of enmity against me¹!”

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2237 of 1879, p. 3.

Meanwhile the state of the country had not improved, even in the *one* respect which was alone really interesting to the Europeans, viz., the prospects for the next Coupon. And no wonder; for, while the charges, always punctually met, for European salaries had largely increased, the revenue had contracted; and in the *six months* ending 30th June, 1878, the *Bondholders* had, according to the returns of the European Comptrollers, *received no less than 2,620,000l., as against only 1,309,000l. received by all Departments of the Government of Egypt.*²

² Parliamentary Papers
2233 of 1879, p. 229.

During this period of direct European supervision it was

apparently deemed imprudent to call for Consular Reports as to the state of the people, or the methods used to collect the taxes. As already hinted, and as will shortly be shown, *these were only produced when it was found desirable to prop up the power of the Europeans, after it had begun to slip from their grasp.*

In descanting on the ever-important question of the Coupon, however, our Consul-General revealed what must have been the state of the people. On 8th January, 1879, the European Ministers then having been five months in the Cabinet, he wrote,—

The financial position of the country is as bad as it well can be. The poverty of the receipts is mainly attributable to two successive years of great disaster, arising from a low Nile, and inundations, *falling upon a country already exhausted by over-taxation. With an empty treasury, and a ghastly amount of debt, heavy demands impending, a serious deficit on the year, and taxes coming in very slowly, the prospect is anything but hopeful; and I confess to a very grave doubt whether the utmost financial skill can enable the country to meet all its engagements in full.*"¹

His fears were fully justified by the Report issued in February, 1879, by the European Commissioners of the Debt, which showed that, in spite of the enormous payments made, and "the serious discounting of the future by employing the proceeds of a permanent capitalization of the Land-tax" (under the Law of Moukabala²), "which will, in 1886, leave the State with only half its land revenue," *no debt worth naming had been wiped off.* The Report concluded by calling serious attention to "*a situation so full of danger in the future.*"³ With all efforts, the Coupon due on 1st April would probably not be met. Nothing more could be hoped from the peasantry, from whom our Consul-General had reported, on 11th January, that "*the taxes are coming in very slowly, IN SPITE OF PRESSURE.*"⁴

The country was indeed in desperate straits; but even yet there was no talk of abating the extortionate claim of 12 to 26 per cent. on the vanished Loans, which was eating out the vitals of the nation. The only result of the crisis was that a stimulus was applied to the fertile brains of the European Ministers *to invent fresh means of taxation, and*

¹ Parliamentary Papers 2397 of 1879, p. 7.

See ante, p. 5.

Parliamentary Papers 2397 of 1879, p. 21.

⁴ Ibid. p. 11.

most unjustly and cruelly to curtail still further the Native branches of the Administration, including the Army. The money thus saved was to be, as a matter of course, all paid into the Bondholders' hands. It was for this purpose, and at this crucial moment (15th February, 1879), that a "Revenue Survey and Settlement" was inaugurated, and Mr. (now Sir) Auckland Colvin, of the Indian Service, was lent to Egypt—just as Mr. (now Sir) Rivers Wilson had been lent by the Home Government—his mission being "to carry out a Land Survey of Egypt." ¹

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2397 of 1879, p. 22.

It must here be prominently noticed, that, among all Eastern races, who have never been subjected to our Western systems of book-keeping exactness, a great variety of different customs, tenures, and privileges have grown up connected with the land, all of which, however ill-defined, have, among the people, the force of absolute rights. We may imagine, then, the feelings of those people, when a corps of aliens appears, and spreads itself abroad over the country, placing in every village its representative, *whose express duty is to dispute and confiscate these rights*. For this reason the Revenue Survey, and its twin brother the Inam Commission, have always been the greatest sources of disaffection in our Indian Empire. Mr. Colvin at once let loose over the country a whole brigade of European Revenue Inspectors, Sub-inspectors, and Surveyors, with the inevitable consequence of instilling a well-grounded fear into the mind of every cultivator in the country as to the tenure of his holding.

No immediate results, however, in the shape of increased remittances, could be expected from the newly-fledged Revenue Survey; and funds were wanted at once. *The only way to produce the needful was further to reduce expenditure on the Native Departments. The axe was therefore now laid to the root of the tree by a sudden withdrawal of supplies from the Native army.* For this, no doubt, the reason was two-fold: 1st, large sums of money could be saved from the army, and 2nd, an alien despotism, such as that now established in the interest of foreigners, would be the more secure,

the more the strength of the native army was reduced. Accordingly, early in February, 1879, as our Consul-General informed his Government, "*reductions in the Army were made on a large scale, by which 2,500 officers were placed on half-pay, WITHOUT RECEIVING THE HEAVY ARREARS DUE TO THEM.*"¹ A large sum of money was thus saved, but

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2397 of 1879, p. 24.

still not sufficient to meet the Coupon. Consequently an inhuman Decree was promulgated by the Cabinet, headed by our European Ministers, whereby "large numbers of Fellahs hitherto exempt from forced labour became liable to it," but might "*purchase exemption by the payment of a sum of money.*"² The Fellahs of the higher class were purposely struck at by this Decree. It was not their labour but their exemption money that was wanted. Naturally a Decree so irritating produced a large amount of disaffection. Other proposals were put forward, such as the increase of the land tax on certain privileged (Ochouri) lands, held by the better class of landholders, which furnishes many members to the Chamber of Delegates.³

² Ibid. p. 23.

³ Ibid. p. 11.

When a country already ruined by extortion is thus threatened with new and scientific methods of depletion; when its great spending departments are brought to a standstill, and those who depend upon them are cheated wholesale, it were marvellous indeed if disaffection did not ensue. There were symptoms now that the weight was, at last, piled too high. The camel's back was breaking. The worm, long trodden on, was turning—feebly indeed, under the foot of its huge destroyer, but still determined once at least to look him in the face. On 11th January, 1879, our Consul-General announced "*the arrival of large deputations of Sheikhs from the provinces, to protest against any pressure for the payment of taxes at that moment;*" and the Consul-General added: "There is a certain amount of fermentation in the country."⁴ He further proceeded to inform his Government *that the CHAMBER OF DELEGATES would probably oppose the increase of the land tax, which the European Ministers had decreed.*⁵

⁴ Ibid. p. 11.

⁵ Ibid. p. 11.

Whenever a National movement began to display itself,

our Consul-General—unmindful of the anxiety which he had hitherto shown to limit the Khedive's personal power, and prevent him from acting except through his Ministry, —feeling that the movement was directed against the European usurpation, proceeded now to threaten, now to cajole the Prince to use his personal influence to stop it. He therefore at once “called the Khedive's attention privately to the arrival of the deputations from the provinces, *and to the attitude of the Chamber of Delegates, as signs of a hostile agitation against the new Administration,*”¹ and gave him “official warning of the very serious responsibility he would incur for any act tending to embarrass the Ministry.”²

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2397 of 1879, p. 13.

² Ibid. p. 13.

The impudent pretence, that the Khedive personally was answerable for, or could prevent, a growing movement in the breasts of a people suffering under wrongs so frightful as those described, was answered by a startling event which occurred at Cairo on the 18th February, 1879. It has just been narrated that, as a method of retrenchment, 2500 officers had suddenly been put on half-pay, without even receiving the arrears due to them. As an immediate result, Mr. Rivers Wilson was warned that a demonstration was about to be made against him. Our Consul-General confessed that “*an uneasy feeling of discontent undoubtedly prevails among the Natives, who are jealous of the large influx of highly-paid European officials.*”³ Mr. Rivers Wilson, however, with official blindness, “refused to admit the probability of any such danger, or the existence of any serious discontent.”⁴ Shortly afterwards, he was pulled out of his carriage, dragged off, and imprisoned in the Ministry of Finance, by a large crowd, headed by 400 of the ill-used officers armed with swords, and only saved by an appeal *ad misericordiam* to the very personal influence of the Khedive, which it had been the one object of his policy to subvert. The Khedive appeared, rescued Mr. Wilson, and quelled the riot. Our Consul-General obviously knew that the disturbance was more or less a National demonstration against the robbery of the Khedive in favour of European Bondholders, and

³ Ibid. p. 24.

⁴ Ibid. p. 26.

his practical deposition in favour of European Ministers. For he at once wrote to Her Majesty's Government, and "*strongly recommended that the Khedive should be allowed the share he claims in the counsels of his Ministers; otherwise troubles in Egypt may become serious.*"¹

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2397 of 1879, p. 25.

Our Consul-General further substantially admitted the right of these officers to press their own grievance, even if their title were denied to protest against the Nation's wrongs. He owned that he was quite "*prepared for an outbreak, as he had of late received several warnings that serious discontent had been created in the Army by some of the recent measures of economy, and particularly by the compulsory retirement, on half-pay, of 2500 officers, who were owed heavy arrears of pay, which were not liquidated, the sufferers being thus left in great distress, and many of them in a state of destitution.*"² He concluded by expressing his own opinion, "*that the real distress and misery caused by the summary dismissal of so many officers, without any means of livelihood, and with heavy arrears of pay due to them, UNDOUBTEDLY JUSTIFIED THEIR DISCONTENT.*"³

² Ibid. p. 26.

³ Ibid. p. 31.

The Khedive also came forward with a word of solemn warning to our Consul-General, as to the National character of the movement. He referred to "*the serious and growing discontent in Upper Egypt, and to the disorganization of all authority throughout the country,*" and added that, unless a change was made, "*he would not be answerable for the consequences.*"⁴ Nubar Pasha, the Prime Minister, also earnestly urged his belief that "*the danger was by no means over.*"⁵ So convinced was our own officer of the gravity and national character of the movement, as directed against the European Ministers, that he seemed to have made up his mind things could not continue on the footing they then occupied; for he concluded his Report of 20th February by saying, that, while the "*experiment of reformed government in Egypt should,*" in his opinion, "*certainly be maintained,*" it should be so "*only with far more consideration than has been shown for the feelings, rights, and prejudices of the Natives.*"⁶

⁴ Ibid. p. 27.

⁵ Ibid. p. 27.

⁶ Ibid. p. 28.

There is a great difference, however, between official writing and official action, when sordid self-interest is involved; and the way that our Consul-General set about showing his new-born "consideration for the feelings, rights, and prejudices of the Natives" was, to say the least, curious. The Prime Minister, Nubar Pasha, had plainly told him that, if the then existing *status quo* of European usurpation continued, and the Khedive were allowed no power, "*he would entirely decline to guarantee public safety; and that the only course left open to him would be to tender his resignation.*"¹ The only effect of this recognition of the influence the Khedive still exercised over the hearts of his people, was to increase the jealousy of our officials, and to make them cast about for means to compass his more complete exclusion. The influence in question had been directed solely to saving the life of the European Minister. Still, here was, in fact, undoubted influence; and influence exercised by any one outside the European Control—be he the Sovereign himself—was wholly objectionable. Our Consul-General could not conceal his chagrin at the discovery, even though it had resulted in the saving of the life of his fellow-countryman. In reporting on 20th February, 1879, that "*but for the Khedive's presence, the affair might have taken much more serious proportions,*"² and that his influence had been put forth only "*under force of circumstances, and for the protection of public order,*" he wailed that, nevertheless, it was practically "*a resumption of no small portion of the power WHICH IT WAS HOPED HAD BEEN WRUNG FROM HIM FOR EVER!*"³ A week later, the apprehension caused by the riot having diminished, he boldly counselled, either that for the future the two European Ministers should possess "*the right of vetoing any measure of which they may disapprove,*" or, failing that, "*that the Khedive should be altogether excluded from his own Cabinet!*"⁴ The European Control well knew that it existed only for itself and the Bondholders; and it felt that every other party in Egypt, whether the Khedive, the Native Ministry, the Chamber of Delegates, the Army, or the People, must be ready to oppose it, if they

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2397 of 1879, p. 27.

² Ibid. p. 27.

³ Ibid. p. 26.

⁴ Ibid. p. 37.

only had the power. Lord Salisbury, therefore, as requested by our Consul-General, on 27th February, 1879, decided "*that the Khedive should be excluded from the Council of Ministers,*"¹ ON THE VERY GROUND OF HIS NOBLE CONDUCT SEVEN DAYS BEFORE, saying that, "*unless measures are taken to counteract the independent power, WHICH THE KHEDIVE HAS SHOWN HIMSELF TO POSSESS, very disastrous effects may be the consequence.*"² It was further decreed that the two European Ministers should possess an absolute right of veto in the Cabinet,³ while the Khedive's son, Prince Tewfik, was, as a matter of grace, allowed to become its nominal President.⁴

This extraordinary decision was forthwith officially announced. The Khedive protested, maintaining that it would certainly lead to commotion in the Country. In reply, he was insolently threatened "*that any further disturbances of the public peace would be regarded as the result of action on his part.*"⁵ Prince Tewfik resigned his nominal post after a month's trial, on the ground "*that ever since he had been President of the Council, he had been kept completely in the background, and had not even been consulted by the other Ministers.*"⁶

From this moment the long-gathering discontent began to develop into a National movement. Our Consul-General had reported thus regarding the disturbance of 18th February: "*Strong threats were used against the Europeans, to whom the blame for the treatment of the Army was chiefly attributed. The cry was raised 'Death to the Christians.'*"⁷ Considerable fermentation was observed among the Native population, and matters looked very black. A message was sent to me by a Turk of high position and standing, "*that matters were extremely serious.*"⁸ His Highness, when consulted, replied "*that the fault lay entirely with those who had brought matters to such a pass; that what had happened was entirely unprecedented in Egypt, and could only have been brought about by great maladministration and mistake.*"⁹

The European Ministers, disregarding these indications

¹ Parliamentary Papers 2397 of 1879, p. 38.

² Ibid. p. 48.

³ Ibid. p. 50.

⁴ Ibid. p. 50.

⁵ Ibid. p. 50.

⁶ Ibid. p. 86.

⁷ Ibid. pp. 31 and 24.

⁸ Ibid. p. 31.

⁹ Ibid. p. 31.

altogether, proceeded further to exasperate the people by announcing their intention of a third time "*forcing the Government of Egypt to pay the Bondholders' Coupon in full*," thereby "*causing great excitement and alarm amongst all classes of the creditors of the Floating Debt.*"¹ A proposal by these creditors that Mr. Wilson should confer with them, with a view of entering into some arrangement, was answered by his insolently refusing to meet them.²

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2397 of 1879, p. 45.

² Ibid. p. 54.

Our Consul-General reported that this refusal "had caused great anxiety and irritation among certain classes of creditors, who are up in arms against the Ministry." He added, "*There are reports of intended public demonstrations, which might not improbably lead to disorder.*"³ On 1st April he announced that there was "considerable agitation" at Cairo, and "*Meetings were held with Notables and Ulemas, with the object of exciting religious animosity against the European Ministers.*"⁴ On the 4th April he explained the objects of these meetings to be, to support the Khedive's financial plan, in opposition to that of Mr. Wilson, and "*to get up petitions to put into force the Turkish Constitution, which had been promulgated in Egypt in 1877, but which had hitherto remained a dead letter;*"⁵ that the persons attending the meetings were not rioters, but "*persons of wealth and position;*" and "that the Ulemas have been led to believe that it is the intention of the European Ministers to hand over the country entirely to Europeans."⁶ Addresses against the designs of the European Ministers were also presented to the Khedive, by sixty-two Delegations of the Clergy and the High Functionaries, seventy-three Civil and Military Officers, forty-one Merchants and Notables, and *sixty members of the Chamber of Delegates.*⁷

³ Ibid. p. 54.

⁴ Ibid. p. 65.

⁵ Ibid. p. 66.

⁶ Ibid. p. 66.

⁷ Ibid. p. 83.

The attempt of the Khedive himself, or of his Native Ministers, to take any part in Egyptian affairs, apart from the wishes and interests of the Bondholders as represented by the two European Dictators, was bad enough; but the mention of the *Representative Chamber* putting in its word was not to be tolerated. Mr. Wilson at once went to the palace,

and delivered a written protest solemnly denouncing the Khedive for encouraging Representative Government, and accusing him of bad faith in "encouraging certain persons" who were demanding a change of the present Constitution."¹

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2397 of 1879, p. 70.

The Khedive replied, that it was not "certain persons," but *the whole nation* that demanded a radical change. Our Consul-General describes his interview with the Khedive and Cherif Pasha as follows :—

The Khedive took me aside and spoke very seriously about *the very great discontent which existed in the country, and the serious consequences which would be likely to ensue*. He begged me to make serious inquiries into the state of the country, and to find out for myself what the real sentiments of the population were; and he was convinced that I would find that he had not exaggerated the gravity of the statement. Cherif Pasha, when appealed to, stated "that there could be no doubt whatever as to the existence of great discontent among all classes of the population; that this discontent arose, in the first instance, from the manner in which the Chamber of Deputies had been treated, and, more especially, by its sudden dismissal without ever having been consulted at all. THE NATION SAW IN THIS AN INSULT TO THEIR REPRESENTATIVES, AND A VERY PAINFUL IMPRESSION WAS PRODUCED."²

² Ibid. p. 85.

Thus the deliberate opinion of the leading statesman in Egypt, whose high character is admitted by our own officers, was, that, as early as April, 1879, *the whole Nation*, and not the Army only, was profoundly moved at the European usurpation, and determined if possible to overthrow it.

On 7th April, 1879, the Khedive, acting under great pressure from all classes of his subjects, intimated to the assembled Consuls-General "that the discontent in the country against the existing state of things had reached such a pitch, that he felt bound to allay it by adopting a radical measure," viz. the dismissal of the two European Ministers. This, he added, was done in consequence of a petition he had received, "*signed by all classes of the population, and which expressed the true wishes of the country.*"³

³ Ibid. p. 85.

The Consuls-General listened in blank dismay to this address, but at length appealed to Cherif Pasha for a public statement of his views. That statesman, in reply, laid great stress on the universal character of the discontent, and concluded with the following emphatic declaration :—

*It would have been impossible for the Khedive to have put himself in opposition to the will of the nation, which had been so positively expressed. His Highness had, in fact, no choice but to follow the course of action he had adopted, in order to allay the discontent, which would have led to disastrous consequences.*¹

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2397 of 1879, p. 85.

It must here be specially remarked, as throwing much light on the more recent discontent, which not only wiped away the European Dictatorship, but chased every European out of the country, that the principal complaint against Mr. Wilson, which in fact led to his fall, was caused by the inopportune publication of a secret Report, in which he had declared "*that he intended to abolish the Moukābāla, whereby the discontent of the whole country, about which there could be no doubt, had been increased.*"² It has been already shown³ that the abolition of the Moukābāla would have the effect, after 1885, of doubling what would otherwise have been the amount of the demand of the State for Land Tax on the vast majority of the landholders in the country, besides involving a serious breach of faith, and (unless full compensation were allowed) cheating them out of the sum of 17,000,000*l.* which up to 1879 they had advanced to the State on the faith of the arrangement. In anticipation of what follows, it may here be stated that, one year later, under the Law of Liquidation, passed by the Control as re-established under the Khedive Tewfik, the Moukābāla was abolished, and all the spoliation and breach of faith which the peasants had feared in 1879 actually overtook them at the close of the following year. Thus, by one single act, nearly every cultivator in Egypt was given a grievance against the European Control, PROPORTIONATE TO A DESTRUCTION OF ONE-HALF OF HIS MEANS OF SUBSISTENCE!

² Ibid. pp. 66 and 72.

³ See ante, p. 5.

A few days after the dismissal of the two Europeans, Cherif Pasha, as Head of the new Ministry, informed our Consul-General "that he only joined it because he was convinced that it represented *the true wishes of the entire population,*"⁴ and assured him that, immediately on the promulgation of the Native Ministry, "the discontent that had been so

⁴ Parliamentary Papers
2397 of 1879, p. 83.

strongly felt with regard to the European Ministers was completely allayed, and there was no danger of any disturbance taking place, *as everybody was perfectly contented.*"¹ "On 14th April the officers of the army took a solemn oath 'to resist all the enemies of the country;' and on the 12th "150 Ulemas and Sheikhs of villages" subscribed an oath, which closed by declaring, "I rejoice at the Europeans having been dismissed from the Administration."²

² Ibid. p. 149.

At the instance of the Consuls-General, a strong attempt was made to constrain the Khedive to reinstate the two Ministers. With that object he was scolded and threatened by our Foreign Office without stint. He was warned that the "precipitate and causeless dismissal of the two Ministers, constituted a grave and apparently intentional discourtesy to friendly Powers,"³ and that, if he did not reinstate them, "he deliberately renounced all pretension to the friendship of England and France."⁴

³ Parliamentary Papers 2352 of 1879, p. 2.

⁴ Ibid. p. 2.

The Khedive, in reply, plainly told our Consul-General that "in the present excited state of public feeling the proposal to reinstate the European Ministers was not one that could be complied with. He would be prepared to submit to any Control, however stringent, but not to the presence of foreigners in the Cabinet."⁵ Cherif Pasha, the Prime Minister, also urged the impossibility of the reinstatement from a National point of view, declaring "*that the Cabinet were determined not to allow His Highness to agree to it, even if he should be inclined to do so. They would resign, and leave the Khedive to his fate, if he should yield in spite of them;* and that the principles of the Ministry did not allow them to agree to the re-establishment of a system *which had become odious.*"⁶

⁶ Ibid. p. 5.

The discharged European Ministers, however, backed as they were by the Consuls-General, had no idea of giving up the game. It was true, their position was awkward, because, after all, the sole purpose for which their office existed, namely, the taking away of half the revenue of the country for usurious creditors, did not form a moral ground, or one that could be stated, for coercing a Government, and maintaining a Dictatorship over a whole nation. It

would be better (if some sort of evidence of the Khedive's misgovernment could be opportunely forthcoming) to get the Powers to insist on their reinstatement as Ministers, on the purely humanitarian and quite disinterested ground, that oppression of the people had followed the loss of their appointments! Bad news from the provinces was urgently needed, and there could be no harm in letting this be known. Our Consul-General told his own Government that he quite expected to receive such news,¹ and he took the best means to fulfil his own prediction. Mr. Felice, a British subordinate at Zagazig, got a cue from his superior to write a few sensational statements, for English consumption, as to the reign of terror which had at once succeeded the withdrawal of the inestimable blessing of British Ministers. All his statements were utterly unsupported, and obviously written under tutelage. His letter begins:—

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2397 of 1879, p. 92.

You ask, how is the new régime working? Worse than before. Three-fourths of the taxes are now exacted by the usual oppressions. The engines of the law, and all sorts of injustice, are applied or dealt to the poor, but, of course, not to the rich. In the present moments the fellaheen have nothing but soil in their fields. I have to add, that the fellaheen are running about the streets like madmen! The officers themselves are in despair at having to use such stringency in collecting money; and there is none to be had!²

² Ibid. p. 162.

This document, though clearly utterly unworthy of notice, was solemnly forwarded to Lord Salisbury as a ground for immediate action *against the Khedive*, “*towards whom*,” instead of towards *the European Ministers*, it was falsely stated that there was “*great hostility in the country*!”³

³ Ibid. p. 162.

This wretched scrap of unsupported and interested testimony, from an illiterate European underling, was immediately taken advantage of as a colourable pretext to urge on the Porte the deposition of the Khedive. It would never do to say that the Prince must be superseded, because he had been forced by his subjects to become their champion against European greed and domineering. It sounded much better to say that he was deposed because, since dismissing the Europeans, “*he had only employed the interval in renewing the extortion and the cruelty by which his Treasury had formerly*

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2352 of 1879, p. 10.

been filled." ¹ He was asked to abdicate, under temptation of a liberal Civil List and succession for his son; but he stoutly refused to do so. The Powers then asked the Porte to depose him; and it did so, in favour of his son. Tewfik Pasha thus inherited the hate of the National party, as being the creature of the Europeans; and his father, despite his grave faults, pandered to by our speculators, and the frightful extortions committed on his subjects to satisfy usurious claims, retained the prestige of having fallen in repelling the encroachments of the plundering foreigners: while, thanks to Mr. Felice's letter, the British Foreign Office, duped throughout by their officials, were enabled to efface from their minds all idea of Bondholders, or British placemanship, and to let down the curtain on the first act of the great Egyptian tragedy with the edifying sentiment:—"HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT HAVE PURSUED NO OTHER POLICY THAN THAT OF DEVELOPING THE RESOURCES, AND SECURING THE GOOD GOVERNMENT OF THE COUNTRY!" ²

² Ibid. p. 2.

PART II.

THE WAR ON THE EGYPTIAN PARLIAMENT AND PEOPLE
IN DEFENCE OF "OFFICIAL SALARIES."

To the reader of the foregoing, it will not now be necessary to prove the fact of the existence of a strong National feeling against the European Control. Enough has already been disclosed to show that it had furnished the whole population with such bitter grievances as must have led to universal hostility, if the Egyptians be but credited with the possession of bodies and minds. Despite all the shallow pretences about securing the good government of the country, the fact remained that on the 26th June, 1879, the new Khedive, Tewfik, was enthroned solely as the creature of the Powers, acting on behalf of the Bondholders; and measures were at once adopted to revive and further increase the power of the European Control in their interest. "Good government" was to be promoted, in so far only as it was compatible with the continued draining away from Egypt of half its revenues, and the paying of enormous salaries to Europeans, wherever they could be employed instead of Natives. *Subject to these important limitations*, there was undoubtedly the intention to expend as well as possible for the people of Egypt *the remainder* of their substance.

On 13th July, 1879, the Khedive was accordingly made to apply in due form for "the re-establishment of the office of European Comptrollers-General,"¹ but *not* for the replacing of European Ministers in his Cabinet. It will not escape notice, that, although the Powers had dethroned the Khedive Ismael for refusing, in deference to national feeling, to reinstate the two European Ministers, they did not now venture so far to brave the national feeling as to reinstate them themselves. The Egyptian orange was,

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2549 of 1880, p. 14.

however, sucked so nearly dry, that all authorities at last acknowledged that money would not be forthcoming, by any possibility, to meet the annual charge for the Debt. No revenue to speak of was coming into the Treasury, although, as our European Comptrollers were well aware, great cruelties were being perpetrated "*in order to prepare for the payment of the Coupon of 1st November.*"¹ Our Consul-General admitted, in October, 1879, three months after the reinstatement of the Comptrollers, that for this purpose "IT HAD BEEN FOUND NECESSARY TO EXERCISE SOME PRESSURE to get in the taxes in the provinces, the revenues of which were pledged to the Commissioners."²

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2549 of 1880, p. 118.

² Ibid. p. 118.

He was well aware of the nature of this "pressure." He knew, on the one hand, that "some European subjects or protégés had not even paid the land tax proper;" and that "a large number of Europeans had become possessed of large estates, which the fellaheen had been compelled to part with for money lent to them at exorbitant rates, *through the machinery of the Mixed Tribunals,*"³ and that the defenceless fellahs had, moreover, after signing the transfers, *been cheated by the Europeans out of "the wretched price of the land."*⁴ He knew, on the other hand, that "demands upon the fellah were so numerous that he was at a loss which to satisfy first;"⁵ that it was "*impossible adequately to describe the wretched state of the poor persons driven with their cattle to the market and followed by their families;*"⁶ that "the natives are very severely whipped;"⁷ that "the fellaheen are oppressed, and severely and cruelly treated, THE WHIP AND BASTINADO BEING THE NECESSARY CONCOMITANTS OF EVERY DEMAND FOR THE PAYMENT OF TAXES;"⁸ and that "*comparatively few persons are imprisoned for failing to pay their taxes, THE USE OF THE WHIP BEING FOUND MORE EXPEDITIOUS AND EFFECTIVE.*"⁹

³ Ibid. p. 20.

⁴ Ibid. p. 79.

⁵ Ibid. p. 48.

⁶ Ibid. p. 118.

⁷ Ibid. p. 118.

⁸ Ibid. p. 19.

⁹ Ibid. p. 25.

But, even with measures like these, the revenues needed for meeting the Debt Charges did not come in, and it was at last recognized that these charges must be reduced. The principle, of course, was that laid down by Major Baring in the previous year, viz., that the reduction should be as slight

as possible, and only just down to the point that "*the people can bear.*"¹

¹ Parliamentary Papers 2233 of 1879, p. 146.

A new European Commission—consisting of Representatives of the Great Powers: two English, two French, one German, one Austrian, and one Italian—was appointed in April, 1880, with all-embracing powers, to decide what reduction would be required. In order to do everything possible to raise the Land Revenue, and thereby minimize the sacrifices of the Bondholders, *the hated Cadastre, or Land Revenue Survey, was revived in its fullest extent, and a fresh cloud of European Surveyors spread over the length and breadth of the country,*² whose presence at such a critical period clearly foreshadowed a double danger to every cultivator,—a design to surcharge his present rent, *and to cheat him out of the right to its permanent reduction by one half in 1886, which he had purchased for hard cash under the Law of Moukâdla.*

² Parliamentary Papers 3237 of 1882, pp. 4 and 5.

On the occasion of the appointment of this Commission a Collective Declaration was signed by the five Great Powers, whereby "*the Contracting Parties reciprocally engaged to recognize as binding the decisions of the Commission of Liquidation;*"³ that is, as expressed in Lord Salisbury's letter to our Foreign Ambassadors, the Collective Declaration was "*destined to place on record the engagements which the Powers take TOWARDS EACH OTHER.*"⁴ *This Declaration was not signed by the Egyptian Government. It was not even signed by the Porte on their behalf. So far as the Egyptian Government was concerned, the Commission was merely appointed by a Decree issued by the Khedive himself, on 31st March, 1880;*⁵ and its expenses were defrayed by the Egyptian Treasury. There was therefore *only a Municipal and no International Engagement entered into by Egypt on that occasion. It is important to notice this; because the contrary allegation forms the basis of the sophism, afterwards invented by the Comptrollers, viz., "The pretension of the Chamber of Delegates to vote the Budget is an infringement of International Engagements."*⁶ This sophism was at once adopted by

³ Parliamentary Papers 2550 of 1880, p. 4.

⁴ Ibid. p. 2.

⁵ Ibid. p. 6.

⁶ Parliamentary Papers 3230 of 1882, p. 51.

our Consul-General, and it is by its means that Parliamentary England has been hoodwinked into its present lamentable position of armed champion of the oppressor against the oppressed.

While the Commission was sitting, it occurred to our Consul-General that he might help the cause of European interference in Egypt, by getting some Reports from his subordinates of a nature to show the inestimable blessings secured to the cultivator by the restoration of the European Comptrollers to their posts. The subordinates well knew what kind of replies would be acceptable, having been asked to furnish their chief with reports as to "the general rumour of success" ¹ that had reached him. The documents so procured were obviously for British consumption, and were at once presented by command to both Houses of Parliament. By mistaken zeal, however, the pictures were too highly coloured. The Millennium had clearly dawned in Egypt. In the following, the hand of Mr. Felice, so useful when the late Khedive had to be deposed, may easily be traced:—

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2606 of 1880, p. 1.

The fellaheen find themselves in an easy and tranquil condition. The collection of taxes is taking place quietly, without torture or imprisonment.

Rich and poor are being treated alike. It does not appear that recourse has been had to money-lenders. *Indeed, my private information is to the effect that money-lenders cannot now employ their capital with the fellah; and the present rates quoted of 8 to 30 per cent. per annum may be regarded as purely nominal.* During the past twelve months the value of land has risen greatly, in many districts as much as 100 per cent., *and even at these prices there are few sellers.*

The natives proceed to the Serraf unasked, to pay the amounts due. The men employed in forced labour are well remunerated, *and many offer their services of their own free will!*

² Ibid. pp. 3 4, 5.

Illegal demands are not now made, *and any person paying taxes in advance does so without compulsion!*²

The Commission's labours resulted in a scheme proclaimed in Egypt on 17th July, 1880, by Decree of the Khedive, and called the "Law of Liquidation." Substantially, its first provision was that the rate of interest on the enormous nominal amounts of the Loans should be reduced from 7 to 4 per cent. But the nominal amount was still further increased by the conversion, AND THE ACTUAL RESULT IS THAT

³ Parliamentary Papers
2766 of 1881, p. 4.

ALTHOUGH, AS IS DEMONSTRATED IN THE APPENDIX* TO THIS HISTORY, EGYPT HAS ALREADY ACTUALLY REPAID THE BONDHOLDERS EVERY SHILLING OF THE MONEY SHE RECEIVED FROM THEM, TOGETHER WITH INTEREST AT 6 PER CENT., YET EGYPT STILL HAS TO PAY NEARLY 8 PER CENT. INTEREST PER ANNUM ON THE VANISHED PROCEEDS OF LOANS AGGREGATING 90 MILLIONS STERLING, CONSUMING 45 PER CENT. OF HER GROSS ANNUAL REVENUES, IN PERPETUITY, AS "NO FIXED PROVISION HAS BEEN MADE FOR THE EXTINCTION OF THE UNIFIED DEBT."¹

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2766 of 1881, p. 5.

The second enactment of this Law of Liquidation was of a nature difficult to characterize; *and it is to it, more than even to the hopeless drain of 3,870,000l. yearly for the Bondholders, that is to be traced the seething discontent and hatred of Europeans that have, ever since its promulgation, obtained in Egypt.* The only way that presented itself, to secure so high a rate of interest as 4 per cent. on the nominal (that is, nearly 8 per cent. on the real) amount of the Loans, was to cheat the cultivator out of 17,000,000l. of hard cash, and 1,700,000l. a year of Land Tax. This was done by repealing the Law of Moukâbala,² thereby *practically confiscating both the 17,000,000l. which the cultivators had paid,³ and the valuable right which they had thereby purchased to a reduction in perpetuity of 50 per cent. in the rental of their lands from the year 1885.* Consequently, not only have the landholders lost their 17,000,000l., but a confiscatory tax on land, amounting to 1,700,000l. sterling is raised from 1,000,000 cultivators every year, to be paid over to the Bondholders. And yet people wonder that there is discontent in Egypt, which hapless country, they protest, has been raised from misery to unalloyed happiness by the *Deus ex machina* of the European Control!

² See ante, pp. 5 and 41.

³ Parliamentary Papers
2766 of 1881, p. 5.

Even if it had been justifiable to cancel the valuable right of the cultivators to a permanent reduction of 50 per cent. in their rents (which included also "*an indefeasible title to their land*"⁴) in defiance of the fact that "*the Khedive had bound himself in the most solemn manner not to reimpose the redeemed moiety in any shape whatever,*"⁵ obviously the least compensation that could have been justly given would have

⁴ Parliamentary Papers
1425 of 1876, p. 5.

⁵ Ibid. p. 5.

* See Appendix p. 86.

been to create and present to the cultivators, in lieu of their cash advances, Unified Stock worth in the market the 17,000,000*l.* (or whatever actual amount they might be found, *after honest inquiry*, to have paid). *Failing this, they were obviously entitled to the full value of the yearly reduction of rent which they were asked to forego, which, capitalized at 14 years' purchase, would have amounted to no less than 24,000,000*l.* sterling.* But will it be believed that, instead of this, a Commission, controlled by two Englishmen, created no Stock whatever, but actually decided that these cultivators, in return for their 17,000,000*l.* of ready money, should merely receive a sum of 150,000*l.* a year¹ for 50 years! This yearly payment, instead of being adequate to liquidate the principal of their ready money claim, was not even sufficient to pay interest on it at 1 per cent. per annum. And except the above miserable pittance, they were to receive NOTHING AT ALL for the loss of their right to the 50 per cent. reduction of rent! As if to add insult to injury, and involve all classes in the general discontent, it was decreed that this very payment of 150,000*l.* was to be raised by levying a new tax on another class of landholders!² With characteristic hypocrisy, the reason assigned for this wholesale robbery of the cultivators was stated to be, that "they might fairly be called upon to submit to even larger sacrifices than the Bondholders, in view of the advantages that would accrue to them from a permanent and creditable settlement of the financial position of their country!"³

This crime against the cultivators has been the greatest single cause of bringing to a head the National movement. No sooner did the Commission begin its labours, than its design in this matter was suspected. Indeed, the presence of the vast array of European Revenue Surveyors throughout the country would have been meaningless, unless with the object of making the Khedive revoke the law under which he had granted a permanent settlement. The President of the Commission was well aware of the feeling thus excited. On 14th August, 1880, he wrote:—

At an early period of the sitting of the Commission, a widespread move-

¹ Parliamentary Papers
2766 of 1881, pp. 9
and 10.

² Ibid. p. 9.

³ Ibid. p. 10.

ment manifested itself among the landholders who had paid the Moukâbâla. This movement even gave evidence of hostility to the Government, who were supposed to be averse to the recognition of the Moukabala claims.¹

¹ Parliamentary Papers 2766 of 1881, p. 9.

Verily, the supposition of the landholders proved to have been but too well founded!

At this point there is a hiatus of more than eighteen months in the published political correspondence. England has thus been purposely kept in the dark regarding what is perhaps the most important chapter in recent Egyptian history. The Report of the Commission (which was published at the close of the year 1880) revealed the fact that the compensation allowed on the revocation of the Moukâbâla was a mockery, and the discontent produced by thus defrauding the landholders and starving the Native Departments for the benefit of the Bondholders, quickly showed itself. Our Consul-General frankly admitted that there had been "*a total neglect of necessary reforms in the army.*"² Peaceful representations on the subject were repeatedly made by the officers, and petitions presented, which not only "*received no due consideration,*"³ but were met by a measure of the utmost turpitude and treachery. The occurrence, which took place on 1st February, 1881, was thus described by our Consul-General eight months later:—"THE OFFICERS WHO HAD PRESENTED A PETITION PRAYING FOR THE NECESSARY REFORMS, WERE INSTRUCTED TO COME TO THE MINISTRY OF WAR ON THE MORNING OF 1ST FEBRUARY, 1881, TO JOIN IN SETTLING THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MILITARY PROCESSION WHICH WAS TO ACCOMPANY ONE OF THE PRINCESSES ON THE OCCASION OF HER MARRIAGE."⁴ It had meanwhile been decided "*that on presenting themselves at the Ministry of War, the three petitioning colonels were to be arrested.*"⁵ It was carefully added that the European Comptrollers were not present at the meeting of the Khedive's Council which decreed the arrest; but it was not stated that they were ignorant of the scheme, which, however treacherous, would have rid them of the most formidable opponents to their policy of reducing the Native Departments.

² Parliamentary Papers 3161 of 1882, p. 28.

³ Ibid. p. 28.

⁴ Ibid. p. 28.

⁵ Ibid. p. 28.

A plot like this certainly deserved to fail ; and it is important to note that the first instance of coercion of our creature, the Khedive, by the military, was directed to the justifiable object of securing its failure. Our Consul-General concludes the story thus : “ *The Colonels, however, had wind of the design, and, before proceeding to the Ministry, left orders with their officers to come with their men and release them, if they did not return within two hours. The Colonels were arrested, and released by force. The Minister of War* ” (a Circassian, named Osman Pasha Rifki)¹ “ *had to escape through a window, and a few hours later was dismissed from office by the Khedive, under compulsion of the riotous soldiery.* ”²

¹ Parliamentary Papers
3249 of 1882, p. 89.

² Parliamentary Papers
3161 of 1882, p. 28.

The refusal of just compensation for the repeal of the Moukābāla, at the close of the year 1880, and, as a sequel, the occurrence in February, 1881, of such a startling event as that just described, clearly indicate that much important information is contained in the correspondence of this period. It is therefore most desirable that Members of Parliament should ascertain, by questions to Her Majesty's Ministers, and motions for papers, whether our Consul-General's letters, written between the revocation of the Moukābāla in January, 1880, and the *émeute* of 9th September, 1881, do not contain still more abundant evidence than we already possess, of a widespread and growing dissatisfaction—not in the army merely, as is now the cue of officials to pretend, but in the country generally. A question should also be put *as to whether the same class of evidence is not contained in the unpublished portions of the numerous letters which are only given in the Blue Books in “extract.”*

The published correspondence reopens with the memorable scene of 9th September, 1881, when 2,500 Egyptian soldiers surrounded the Khedive's palace, and, headed by Colonel Arabi Bey, demanded—1st, the dismissal of the Ministry “ *which had sold the country to the English ;* ”³ 2nd, the convocation of a Representative Chamber ; and 3rd, the raising of the army to 18,000 men. The fact that Arabi Bey demanded the increase of the army will be intel-

³ Ibid. p. 3.

ligible enough after reading all the preceding history. The Army was one of the principal Native Departments which had been studiously reduced and impoverished by the Comptrollers, with the double object, 1st, of saving money for the Bondholders, and 2nd, of preventing opposition from the people, *who, it was felt, would have no other possible way of opposing the bleeding process, if the national army were suppressed.* It was but natural, therefore, that one of the articles in the National programme should be to prevent its reduction or extinction. Every organized oppression must be opposed by some kind of material force; and the army was the only force in Egypt which could support the National will. It suited the Control to deny the reality of the national feeling that its own conduct had provoked; just as it always suits an oppressor to declare that there is happiness and tranquillity in the country he oppresses. Luckily the history of later events has shown the pretence to have been absurd; for it will presently be proved, to a demonstration, *that the sole cause of the rupture between the Powers and Egypt* HAD NOTHING WHATSOEVER TO DO WITH THE ARMY, BUT WAS SOLELY IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE REFUSAL OF OUR COMPTROLLERS TO ALLOW THE NATIONAL CHAMBER THEIR JUST RIGHT TO VOTE THEIR OWN BUDGET. Our officials in Egypt, however, suppressing this all-important fact, have made most determined efforts to convince the English nation that nobody in Egypt dislikes them, or has raised any issue with them, except a few mutinous soldiers. The wisdom of this misrepresentation is undoubted. It would never do for those who existed only for the Bondholders to admit that a really National feeling had arisen against their organized extortions, whereby one half of the income of the Nation was expropriated. Especially would the most Liberal Government that ever ruled this land be jealous of any attempt to trample out such a feeling. It was much better to say that the fellah was so ignorant a person, and so used to extortions, that he had no objection to being condemned for life to worse than penal servitude,

for the sake of creditors he had never seen. The Egyptian eel was a reptile so accustomed to be skinned, that it rather enjoyed the process!

In pursuance of the design of separating the action of the military from that of the Egyptian people, our Officials have persistently represented Arabi Bey as merely a mutinous Colonel of the army, instead of, as he really was, *a political leader of the people*. They represent him when first appearing on the scene in September, 1881, as refusing to leave Cairo WHEN ORDERED TO DO SO; BUT THEY CAREFULLY SUPPRESS THE FACT THAT HIS SOLE OBJECT IN REMAINING WAS TO AID THE CHAMBER OF DELEGATES IN OBTAINING "AN ORGANIC LAW, GIVING A MUCH LARGER SCOPE TO THE POWERS OF THE CHAMBER"—IN FACT, CONSTITUTING IT "A CHAMBER TO WHICH ARE ATTACHED ALL THE PRIVILEGES OF A CHAMBER IN A CONSTITUTIONAL COUNTRY";¹ AND THAT FOR THIS PURPOSE, VIZ., "TO SUPPORT HIS DEMAND FOR A CONSTITUTION, NO FEWER THAN 150 OF THE DELEGATES ARRIVED IN FOUR DAYS FROM THE PROVINCES AT HIS SUMMONS."²

¹ Parliamentary Paper 3161 of 1882, p. 49.

² Ibid. p. 9.

In the affair of the 9th September, 1881, Arabi Bey did not behave as a mutinous officer, *but as a political liberator*. He claimed no increase of pay or rank for himself or his followers. On the contrary, when taunted by the English Comptroller-General, Mr. Colvin, with being mutinous, he frankly replied that he was there "to secure by arms *the liberties of the Egyptian people*."³ The three measures which he there and then forced on the Khedive had *National* and not personal bearings. Our Consul-General remarked on his "most courteous attitude," and recorded his telling appeal "*to England, who had made such efforts for the liberation of slaves, to sympathize with the Egyptians in their attempt to obtain liberty*."⁴ With the appointment of a more liberal Ministry the riot ceased.

³ Ibid. p. 2.

⁴ Ibid. p. 3.

Liberty for the Egyptian people, however, was not to be thought of. The first use they would make of it would, no doubt, be to check the wholesale depletion of their country by the foreigner. This National movement

must be stamped out, or, if that could not be done, it must be misrepresented as a mere military mutiny, and the Control preserved, at all hazards, in none but English and French hands. A personal "fear of punishment" was represented by our Consul-General as "the chief motive instigating the leaders" ¹ whose arrest by treacherous means, on the 9th September, 1881, the English Comptroller-General did his utmost to secure. ²

¹ Parliamentary Papers
3161 of 1882, p. 14.

² Ibid. p. 4.

A suggestion made by our creature, the Khedive, that Turkish troops should be sent for, elicited a strong negative from England and France, plainly showing that these Powers dreaded interference by any one but themselves, as possibly injurious or even fatal to the *Control*. ³ The Sultan then proposed to send a Turkish General to Egypt; but against this step, even, our Foreign Office urgently wrote "to dissuade His Majesty." ⁴ He next suggested that he would like to despatch a mere "Aide-de-Camp charged with compliments and advice," but even this was severely frowned upon. ⁵ His Majesty did, however, despatch two envoys, "merely carrying a letter," ⁶ a course which immediately called forth the strongest remonstrances from the two Powers. They demanded that the Porte should "shorten as much as possible the stay in Egypt of the envoys," ⁷ and threatened them with the "*fatal effects* of any endeavours on the part of the Ottoman emissaries to interfere with the internal administration or existing regime of Egypt." ⁸ On the following day they ordered the despatch of two ironclads to Alexandria, amid the united protests of our Consul-General (who telegraphed that "the news was creating agitation among the Natives" ⁹), the Egyptian Premier, and the Porte. ¹⁰ The last-named warned our Ambassador that "*the demonstration implied danger for Alexandria, and was calculated to cause agitation and disturbance among the whole Arab population, and not improbably might lead to a general revolution.*" ¹¹ The ironclads were despatched, ostensibly as places of refuge for British and foreign subjects; ¹² but in a few days their presence was turned into a demonstration against the Sultan him-

³ Ibid. pp. 5 and 11.

⁴ Ibid. p. 14.

⁵ Ibid. p. 24.

⁶ Ibid. p. 33.

⁷ Ibid. p. 33.

⁸ Ibid. p. 38.

⁹ Ibid. p. 50.

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 51.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 51.

¹² Ibid. p. 41.

self, who was told on 12th October, 1881, *that, if he would withdraw his envoys, the Powers would withdraw their ships.*¹ *

¹ Parliamentary Papers
3161 of 1882, p. 52.

Meanwhile a number of new Vernacular journals had been established in Egypt, all of which commented very strongly, though in quite legitimate language, on the wretched position of Egypt under the European Control. Here were new opponents, who must be silenced at all risks; for, if they did not increase the National feeling, they would at least *reveal the existence* of that which our Officials were doing all in their power to deny. Our Consul-General had some of their comments translated, and he at once insisted that the Khedive should warn and suppress the journals. The following are some of the strongest passages :—

We do not wish to expel foreigners from our country, but we must cease to employ them in our Administrations. The *Times* says that in the Control Europe has conferred a great benefit on Egypt. We say, on the contrary, that we have been loaded with a crushing burden. England and France are at variance in their political interests, *but they are agreed in their financial views.* We are the prey of two lions. All the Europeans receive disproportionately large salaries; but, if England and France had to pay them themselves, they would quickly abandon their intervention here. In the beginning we received them as guests, but now they are established on pretence of protecting political and financial interests. One day we hope to see our Administration cleared of all Europeans; and on that day we shall say that England and France have rendered us a great service. Up till now we have treated foreigners with all courtesy, and even as if they belonged to a superior creation. Seeing this, they have resolved to make as much profit as they can out of us. The only difference between foreigners and ourselves lies in our kindlier and more noble nature, and their superior military

² Parliamentary Papers
3230 of 1882, pp.
2, 3, and 14.

force.² For uttering such sentiments our Consul-General succeeded in getting one newspaper suspended, and another suppressed altogether, duly reporting his victory to Her Majesty's Government.³

³ Ibid. p. 6.

The peccant newspapers having been silenced, a native

* The above incidents, coupled with the natural repugnance that the Porte must feel in coercing its Egyptian subjects back into pecuniary slavery, in the interests of the Bondholders, may help to explain its recent extreme reluctance to join the Conference, or to send troops to Egypt.

of Cairo, called Enani Bey, no doubt imagining that the British Consular arm could not suppress mere *verbal conversation*, gave a fête in a garden, to commemorate the political triumph of the 9th September.¹ A few days afterwards he was arrested and imprisoned, on a charge of fraudulent bankruptcy, *notwithstanding that he had just been tried and acquitted of that very charge by the regular Courts a few days previously.*² Arabi Bey went to the Minister of Justice, and informed him that, unless Enani Bey were released, he would be liberated by force. He was released immediately, thereby making our Consul-General express to his Government the wishful belief that "*there would be no more of such incidents, if the colonels will now go quietly back to their commands.*"³

¹ Parliamentary Papers 3230 of 1882, p. 12.

² Ibid. p. 13.

³ Ibid. p. 13.

But a more redoubtable opponent of the oppression of Egypt by the Control had appeared. The Press might be suspended; Enani Bey might be imprisoned; but the Chamber of Delegates could not be so disposed of. This Representative Body had been established in 1866, under Rules totally fatal to its being able to impress on the Government the will of the Nation; its presiding officers being appointed by the Khedive, and its powers restricted purely to discussion. The Chamber was seldom allowed to exercise even these limited powers. In fact, the Khedive had been discouraged from convoking it; for it was felt that the less the comfortable *status quo* was commented upon by any one, the better it would be for the Control and the Bondholders. It should have been noticed, however, that, as early as the spring of the year 1879, the Chamber had presented for the Khedive's acceptance a Code of more liberal Rules for its proceedings, and had made its influence felt sufficiently to cause the resignation of the Ministry, on the Khedive's refusal to pass these Rules.⁴

⁴ Parliamentary Papers 3161 of 1882, p. 49, and 2549 of 1880, p. 65.

Ten days after the affair of the 9th September, 1881, the new Prime Minister, Cherif Pasha, suggested to our Consul-General that the Chamber of Delegates, which was shortly to be convoked, would be "the legitimate exponent of the internal wants of the country, and by this means deprive

¹ Parliamentary Papers
3161 of 1882, p. 26.

the Army of the character which it had arrogated to itself in the late movement.”¹ But the last thing our Consul-General wanted was any exponent, legitimate or otherwise, of the wants of the country; as these could not but be inconsistent with the wants of the Control, and its constituents. Moreover, it was well known that the members of the Chamber were endeavouring to get a repeal of the old Rules that restricted their procedure, which Cherif Pasha plaintively admitted were “*doubtless no longer in harmony with the aspirations of the country*,”² and that they hoped to be convoked under new Rules which would give them larger powers. Here was a difficulty. That the Chamber should be convoked at all was bad enough; but that it should be convoked under a new Decree, with enlarged powers, was very much worse.

² Ibid. p. 16.

In this dilemma our Consul-General, and Mr. Colvin, the English Comptroller, resolved to make a virtue of necessity, and to steal a march on the Chamber by insisting on the Khedive hastily convoking it under its old Rules, and thus defeating its intention to apply for new Rules. Meanwhile our Consul-General concerted a scheme to get Arabi Bey—who, *it will be remembered*, had assisted the Chamber in demanding the new Rules—to quit Cairo.³

³ Ibid. p. 49.

Both these devices were for the moment successful. In two days a Decree was issued summoning the Chamber.⁴ Other two days and Arabi Bey had left Cairo, amidst a popular demonstration in his favour, he being escorted through Cairo by a large crowd, “everywhere received with enthusiasm, and finally carried from his horse to the Railway carriage.”⁵

⁴ Ibid. p. 61.

⁵ Ibid. p. 62.

In presence of this manifestation of popular feeling, it was deemed urgently necessary to fortify the Khedive against giving way to any popular aspirations which the Chamber on assembling might show. The Control, and the continuous draining away half the revenues of Egypt to the Bondholders, must be especially secured as outside the pale of the Chamber's comments. A manifesto was therefore addressed to the Khedive, (*nominally* by his own minister, Cherif Pasha), containing the following warnings:—“The Chamber of Delegates will fulfil its

mission, *without injuring interests which must be respected.*"¹ "It is hardly necessary to state that the conventions and institutions in force, created by the financial situation, cannot be discussed by the Chamber. They are the outcome of International Engagements, and cannot be modified in any way without the Powers who were contracting parties to them."² It has already been shown that this was simply a falsehood. No International Engagement existed, pledging the Khedive to maintain a single European in his service, or to pay a shilling of Egypt's revenues to the Bondholders.

¹ Parliamentary Papers
3161 of 1882, p. 61.

² Ibid. p. 61.

The elections were held in November, and the Comptrollers, despite their desire to assume the non-existence of a National sentiment, soon discovered that there was a determination among the Delegates to vote on the Budget, with the object of regulating the allotments for the Native Administrative Service, in order to prevent its being altogether starved by the European dictatorship. The Khedive, the creature of the Powers, admitted to our Consul-General, that the reforming tendencies of the Delegates had made him "*full of misgiving*," consequent on "*a mistrust of what the Delegates might do.*"³ Our Consul-General had certified on 23rd September, that "*while*" under the Control "*other branches of the Administration and the country generally were being cared for,*" there had been a "*total neglect of necessary reforms in the Army.*"⁴ Naturally enough, therefore, an increased credit was asked for by the new Minister of War, as absolutely necessary to preserve its efficiency in the National interest.

³ Parliamentary Papers
3230 of 1882, p. 42.

⁴ Parliamentary Papers
3161 of 1882, p. 23.

The very idea of increasing the expenditure on any Native Department, and especially on one which, in direct proportion to its efficiency, could offer resistance to their expropriation policy, filled the Comptrollers with alarm. They refused the grant asked for,⁵ and, in order to support the refusal, *flatly announced their intention "not to submit the Budget to the Chamber for discussion or sanction."*⁶

⁵ Ibid. p. 22.

These proceedings were communicated in due course both to the English and French Governments. It was

not to be tolerated that the omnipotence of the Control should be menaced, even by the representatives of the Egyptian people. M. Gambetta accordingly spoke to Lord Lyons on the 14th and 24th December. "*He observed that the approach of the meeting of the Chamber of Notables at Cairo made him uneasy. It was, he said, impossible to foresee what line they would take. They might insist upon the adoption of the anti-European schemes of the so-called National party.*"¹ *The best chance of preventing fresh mutinous proceedings in Egypt lay in making it apparent that France and England were resolved not to tolerate them. THE SESSION OF THE CHAMBER OF NOTABLES WHICH WAS ON THE EVE OF BEING OPENED, would afford France and England a not unsuitable opportunity for encouraging Tewfik Pasha, strengthening his position, and discouraging the promoters of disorders.*"²

¹ Parliamentary Papers
3230 of 1882, p. 21.

² Ibid. p. 24.

Such were the circumstances under which the now famous Dual Note of 6th January, 1882, was framed and served on the Egyptian Government by England and France. It made no pretence of dealing with or conserving rights connected with the Suez Canal, India, or even Commerce; none of these being in the smallest degree threatened. *It was solely directed to intimidate the Egyptian Parliament from voting any part of their own Budget, lest, by increasing the expenditure on the Native Administration, they should in the smallest degree diminish the security enjoyed by the Bondholders for the punctual payment of their claims. Our Foreign Office admitted this in so many words three days later, when they intimated that their opposition to the demands of the Chamber had reference to "the pecuniary interests on behalf of which Her Majesty's Government have been acting."*³ With these explanations, the plain meaning of the Dual Note as simply a menace to Representative Government in Egypt, is sufficiently plain from its own text, which says "*Recent circumstances, ESPECIALLY THE MEETING OF THE CHAMBER OF NOTABLES, have given the two Powers the opportunity of a further exchange of views. The two Governments are closely associated in a resolve to guard by their*

Ibid. p. 44.

united efforts against all cause of complications, internal or external, which might MENACE THE ORDER OF THINGS ESTABLISHED IN EGYPT." ¹ The collateral correspondence proves the fact still more plainly. Our Foreign Secretary told Lord Lyons that the intention of the Dual Note was "to take occasion from the approaching opening of the session of the CHAMBER OF NOTABLES to encourage the Khedive to maintain and assert his proper authority;" ² and M. Gambetta stated to Lord Lyons that "*it behoved France and England to be very firm, lest any appearance of vacillation on their part should encourage THE PRETENSIONS OF THE NOTABLES TO LAY THEIR HANDS ON THE BUDGET,*" as "*their touching it must inevitably lead to the overthrow of the arrangement made by the Liquidation Commission, and to the subversion of the French and English Control.*" ³

¹ Parliamentary Papers 3230 of 1882, p. 36.

² Ibid. p. 25.

³ Ibid. p. 45.

Armed with so powerful a weapon, the two Consuls-General at once made full use of the Dual Note, to intimidate all concerned. We do not know what statements were made to the Khedive by our Consul-General when presenting the Note, as *his letter announcing the presentation has apparently been omitted from the Blue Book No. 3230 of 1882, at page 37 of which is found only a telegram of thirteen words on the subject.* We may judge of their purport, however, from the communications our Consul-General made to the President of the Chamber, whom he certified to be "regarded as a man of much moderation." ⁴ He told him "*that, if the Chamber began by attacking institutions which were considered by the Powers to be necessary, it would forfeit their goodwill,*" ⁵ and on the same day he chronicled that the French Consul-General "*said very severe things to the President of the Chamber.*" ⁶

⁴ Ibid. p. 26.

⁵ Ibid. p. 26.

⁶ Ibid. p. 51.

Against these almost overpowering forces, the Chamber stood firm; and the fact may tend to show the intensity of the national feeling which had been evoked. It should be distinctly stated that no claim was put forward by the Chamber to vote or even discuss that part of the Budget whereby half the revenues of Egypt stood assigned to the service of the Debt. The assignment, as already said, was made by no

International Engagement, but merely by Decree of the Khedive himself; which he had every right to annul or alter, if required by the wants of the country. Probably the Chamber did not and never will know (unless this history is translated into Arabic) the real particulars of the sad story of the vanished Loans. Most likely they supposed, as many Europeans still do, that their proceeds were largely expended in the public works of the country. Anyhow, all idea of tampering with the Assigned revenues was most positively disclaimed by the Chamber. Collaterally with the presentation of the Dual Note, a new set of restrictive Rules had been imposed on the Chamber. No. 31 of these, however, *authorized it to express its opinions on the Budget;*"¹ and, with highly praiseworthy moderation, the Delegates resolved to exclude the Assigned half entirely from their cognizance. But they insisted on their natural right to vote the various credits of the other or Unassigned half, which dealt entirely with the supplies necessary for the internal Administration of the country. *These, they pointed out, had no possible relation with alleged International Engagements of any kind whatever.*

¹ Parliamentary Papers
3230 of 1882, p. 44.

What will be the verdict of history on the shameful fact that two or three European officials did not hesitate to plunge the world into war solely by their positive refusal of this very reasonable claim by the Egyptian Parliament, to vote the credits necessary for their own internal Administration? And what was the sole reason that they could give, *and gave*, for the persistent refusal? Not fear for the safety of our Indian Empire; not zeal for the neutrality of the Suez Canal; not jealous care for the sanctity of so-called International Engagements; not longing for the prosperity of the people—*only the possibility of an indirect, remote, and hardly tangible diminution of the securities possessed by the Bondholders, and the probability of a reduction of the appointments and salaries of themselves and their countrymen.* That this is the only real reason why the Comptrollers, and their friends the Consuls-General, refused the request of the Chamber, forced it to demand and

set up a National Ministry in February last, and brought about all the present fearful results, will be conclusively proved from what follows.

It has already been noticed that our Consul-General, when pressed by the President to state his reasons for denying the right demanded by the Chamber, replied "that the pretension of the Chamber to vote the Budget was an infringement of International Engagements." The President met this by pointing out that the alleged International Engagements, viz., the Decrees of the Khedive, which assigned certain revenues for payment of interest on Loans, *dealt exclusively with the revenues so assigned, and had nothing whatever to do with the unassigned portion.*¹ Parliamentary Papers 3230 of 1882, p. 49. The fact was undeniable, Sir R. Wilson having himself specially reported, on 14th August, 1880, *that, under these very Decrees, the Egyptian Government "HAS THE FREE DISPOSAL"* of the unassigned Budget.² But some quibble had to be invented whereby a right over the *whole* could be pretended by the Comptrollers. With laborious thought and far-fetched reasoning, they proved equal to this crisis, and evolved a kind of theory, which has only to be stated to stand condemned as shifty and dishonest. It amounted to this, *that, although the only substantial interest of the Bondholders, viz., the payment of the Coupons, was secure, being provided for from the other or Assigned side of the Budget, yet they had a certain minute and indirect interest in the expenditure on the Administration of the country being properly conducted, because the Egyptian Government had engaged to contribute a small sum annually (when it possessed a surplus) to a fund for buying up its own Stock in the market!*³ * Such is the recondite and dishonest theory, with ³ Parliamentary Papers 3249 of 1882, p. 73.

* The following is the text of the actuarial question, which it has been thought necessary to submit to the arbitrament of war :—

"Extract from the Report of the Comptrollers-General, dated 13th March, 1881. (Parliamentary Papers, 3249 of 1882, p. 73).

"*There need be no fear that the revenues assigned to the Caisse de la Dette will prove insufficient, either for the payment of the annual interest thereon, or for the redemption of the Debt.*

"But a Deficit in the Budget of the non-assigned revenues will cause

regard to certain small and hypothetical interests of usurious Bondholders, to defend which England has been duped by its officials into going to war with the Egyptians.

¹ Parliamentary Papers
3230 of 1882, p. 71.

The Chamber offered many concessions by way of compromise, such as that the Budget should be voted by a Joint Council, consisting of the Ministry and a corresponding number of members of the Chamber.¹ But all advances were met with unbending defiance, although our Consul-General, on 20th January, 1882, admitted his belief that "the Chamber would listen *if the Great Powers were to consent to GUARANTEE A CONSTITUTION COMPATIBLE WITH INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENTS,*" and though he fully recognized that "*this is the only way out of a situation which is rapidly leading both us and the Egyptians to extremities.*"²

² Ibid. p. 52.

A pretence of a legal basis for the fiction of the "International Engagements" was first invented by our Consul-General on the 15th January, 1882, when, being pressed by the President to show any valid ground for resisting the Chamber's claim to vote the Unassigned Budget, he pointed to two Decrees of the Khedive, dated 18th November, 1876, and 15th November, 1879, the former of which vested the responsibility for the Budget in the Ministry, and the latter of which declared that the former could only be modified with the consent of England and France.³ THIS EXTRAVAGANT DOCTRINE WAS EQUIVALENT TO ASSERTING THAT A MUNICIPAL PROCLAMATION BY A STATE TO ITS OWN SUBJECTS BECOMES AN INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT, SHOULD ANY CLAUSE IN IT EXPRESS AN INTENTION TO CONSULT ANOTHER POWER; ALTHOUGH THE STATE HAS, IN FACT, ENTERED INTO NO ENGAGEMENT WHATEVER WITH THAT POWER ON THE SUBJECT. This is exactly the position of Egypt. It has entered into no International Engagements whatever with the Powers regarding the Debt or the Control. And why? Simply because

³ Ibid. p. 55.

a fresh Floating Debt, *which will prevent the Government from the further redemption of the Consolidated Debt by contributing its quota towards the sum set apart for that purpose.*"

the Powers did not dare so far to disgrace themselves as to propose either to the Sultan or the Khedive a Treaty for such an unprecedented purpose as to bind a country to pay interest on its debts to private individuals. The Powers, in fact, used the Khedive himself to Decree that the Egyptian State should, through the machinery of the Control, pay away half its revenues to usurious creditors; because they were well aware, not only that no international conventions between Egypt and themselves existed in that behalf, but that, *according to the practice of nations, they could not decently create any.*

Our Consul-General, however, at once conveyed to Lord Granville the ingeniously prepared sophism, by which he has succeeded in plunging the world into war. It is short and clear, and will probably become historical. The only evil is that it is shamelessly selfish, and false in fact. "The voting of the Budget by the Chamber is an infraction of International Conventions."¹ FREE PARLIAMENTARY ENGLAND IS NOW FIGHTING EGYPT TO UPHOLD THIS DOCTRINE !

¹ Parliamentary Papers 3230 of 1882, p. 72.

Her Majesty's Government adopted the sophism, and suggested that France should concur in enforcing it by a joint despatch to the Porte. M. Gambetta, however, was on this point more scrupulous than the English Government. He objected to state that the Khedive's Decrees themselves were International Engagements, and insisted on naming them merely, as the proclamations "by which the Powers were invited to reorganize the administration of the finances."² But the more cautious wording of a despatch at the instance of M. Gambetta had no effect in modifying the language used by our Officials to the Chamber. The latter were told that their voting of the Budget "overrode the International Engagements arising from the establishment of the Control,"³ and the President of the Council was warned that he would not be entitled to confidence "if he began by setting aside what Her Majesty's Government considered to be an International Obligation."⁴

² Ibid. p. 75.

³ Parliamentary Papers 3249 of 1882, p. 13.

⁴ Ibid. p. 17.

The Khedive was hardly convinced by the argument from international engagements. He was therefore straightway

plied with his duty to the Sultan his Suzerain. While the two Powers were urging on the Sultan that his Suzerainty over the Khedive was of such a shadowy character, that it was not infringed by the Powers dictating an important policy to the latter, without even employing the Sultan as a channel, at the same moment their officials were engaged in urging on the Khedive that he should plead a *non possumus* to the Chamber in respect of the reform they sought, on the ground "*that the Khedive is the Delegate of the Sultan, and that the power of making a change of this nature does not reside with him.*"¹

¹ Parliamentary Papers
3230 of 1882, p. 54.

Meanwhile this attempt totally to subvert the natural right of the people's Representatives had created a strong feeling in the country. On the 21st January, 1882, our Consul-General reported that insults had begun to be offered to Europeans, and that the "feeling of the Native population towards foreigners had become hostile."² A few days before, a Vice-Consul had declared that the population of Damietta "had within the past few days assumed an attitude of a very insulting and threatening character," that the French Vice-Consul had been three times insulted in the main street of the city, and that "consequences most grave might result at any moment from the excited and fanatical state of the population." So strong had the National feeling become, that our Consul-General considered that even a threat of armed intervention on our part would lead to "*the most serious danger to the European population, and a resistance which would lead to prolonged bloodshed.*"³ The English Comptroller also came forward to testify to "*the growing popular animus against the European element in the Administration.*"⁴ An Arab newspaper, undismayed by the more than Draconian Press Law introduced by the British Consul-General, complained bitterly of the manner in which pilgrims had been cheated and ill-used by certain European Sanitary officers, and bewailed that "the influence of foreigners, which is spread over Egypt, is insupportable for an animal, much more so for a man."⁵ The stricture, if severe, was probably within

² Ibid. p. 70.

³ Ibid. p. 78.

⁴ Parliamentary Papers
3249 of 1882, p. 45.

⁵ Ibid. p. 57.

the facts; for on 23rd January, 1882, our own Consul-General reported that the insults to the French Vice-Consul were caused by his having had a boy locked up for having called him a name in the street. "*A little child*" had used towards him a similar expression, "*and the child's father, on the complaint of the Vice-Consul, was imprisoned for twenty-four hours!*"

¹ Parliamentary Papers
3230 of 1882, p. 72

The feeling in the country made itself felt in the Chamber, which on 2nd February, 1882, demanded and procured the nomination of a National Ministry. The new Cabinet at once proceeded to pass the new Organic Law, giving the powers over the Budget demanded by the Chamber.

The storm thus rising in the country gave our officials no concern. They only treated the Chamber, the people's representatives, with increased imperiousness. When reminded that their seats in the Council gave them no right even to vote on questions of the Administration, they arrogantly replied that "*the action of the Control extends to the whole public service;*"² an extravagant assumption which led M. de Freycinet to observe that "*it never could have been intended that the Comptrollers should take the direction of the whole government of Egypt.*"³ The new Ministry approached them with the most friendly assurances as to the moderation of the views of the Chamber, while pressing their claim to vote the unallotted half of the Budget. The Prime Minister, Moustapha Fehmy, submitted a courteous and telling memorandum, in the following words:—

² Parliamentary Papers
3249 of 1882, p. 8.

³ Ibid. p. 33.

It is beyond doubt that the sole cause and object of the institutions created in Egypt in consequence of the international arrangements, were to guarantee the regular fulfilment of the obligations of the country towards the creditors. The Foreign Governments never ceased protesting that it was their intention not to mix themselves up in the internal administration of Egypt. *The Organic Law withholds in an absolute manner from the vote of the Chamber all the Credits necessary for the service of the Public Debt. Consequently the interests of creditors ought once more to be reassured.*

The Government of His Highness hopes that this promulgation will tend to remove misgiving, *by the absolute reservation of all questions relative to the Public Debt.*

But can the Government be fairly blamed for admitting the taxpayers to examine the use of the public funds devoted to Administrative expenses? Is it not a right common to all countries, a primordial right, which cannot seriously be denied to the Government of His Highness, without denying at the same time the prerogative of internal administration for Egypt?¹

¹ Parliamentary Papers
3249 of 1882, p. 7.

It was impossible to reply to these arguments. The new Ministry and the Chamber having, with rare moderation, excluded the service of the Debt from supervision by the latter, had clearly provided for the security of every public interest which could be named, even including that of the Bondholders. Nothing, in fact, was left in the power of the Chamber but the private interests of the Comptrollers and their friends. That power could really extend to nothing except the reduction of unduly large salaries, or the dismissal of some Europeans from the Egyptian Service. But this was enough to make the Comptrollers continue to defy both Ministers and Chamber.

They could not pretend that much else was at stake but their own personal position. On 11th February they themselves confessed that "*the change of Ministry, so far as the Control is concerned, has not hitherto brought about any direct difficulties.*"² The Consul-General even admitted that it was "possible that the Chamber, if it possessed the right" which it demanded, "*might use it with moderation and good sense.*"³ Yet the Comptrollers went on to avow that, as "the Control has always relied for its efficacy"—not on the advantages which it confers on Egypt—but "on the respect felt for the two Powers," it is very apprehensive for the future, because "*the Chamber now feel that the power resides with them,*" and while the Control may be useful, "*because the Comptrollers are men of long experience,*" they hope "to make use of it only "*so far as it suits them, and no further.*"⁴

² Ibid. p. 28.

³ Parliamentary Papers
3230 of 1882, p. 50.

⁴ Parliamentary Papers
3249 of 1882, p. 28.

In short, the Comptrollers declared that they would not accept the position of servants of the Egyptian Government, but must be its masters; for our Consul-General, writing on their behalf, concluded as follows—"It becomes a question whether it is useful or dignified for *England and France* (1) to maintain Comptrollers, when they can no

longer control.”¹ For the paramount object of sustaining their own power, our officials avowed themselves quite ready to make short work with Representative Institutions in Egypt, by crushing the Chamber out of existence if no gentler means sufficed. While the Consul-General fully admitted on 11th January, 1882, that “*the Egyptians have distinctly, for good or for evil, entered on a Constitutional path,*” and “*that the Organic Law of the Chamber*” (the enforcement of which was their sole demand) “*is their Charter of liberties,*” yet he added, in the same breath, “*The Chamber exists, and will continue to do so unless it is forcibly suppressed, which can only be done by intervention, AND THIS IS A LAST RESOURCE.*”

¹ Parliamentary Papers
3249 of 1882, p. 28.

The Chamber thus put the Comptrollers thoroughly in the wrong, by conceding to them all that their official position and duties could possibly require. Lord Granville himself admitted this on 4th February, after the formation of the National Ministry, when, even on the erroneous assumption of International Engagements, he declared that “*a case for intervention has not at present arisen, since the intention is avowed to maintain International Engagements.*”² Our Consul-General admitted on the same day that the new powers of the Chamber “*would create a new order of things, not necessarily in itself disastrous,*” but “*fatal to the system under which the Control has been worked.*”³ And in the previous month he had telegraphed to Lord Granville the only real apprehension raised by the claim of the Chamber, in these words:—“*If the Chamber acquires this right, the Comptrollers lose their hold on the finances.*”⁴

² Parliamentary Papers
3230 of 1882, p. 84.

³ Parliamentary Papers
3249 of 1882, p. 17.

⁴ Parliamentary Papers
3230 of 1882, p. 44.

But other evils might befall the Comptrollers personally, besides curtailment of departmental duties. The pruning knife of the Chamber might possibly be applied to the huge salaries, and the comfortable appointments and highly remunerative Government contracts that they had given to their friends and relations. It was certainly worth while to go a long way to coerce a National Ministry, and it might even be justifiable to go to war with the Egyptian nation, to prevent such real dangers. The Comptrollers were

well aware that these were the matters really threatened, and not the Suez Canal, India, or even the claims of their clients the Bondholders. This came out clearly in a joint memorandum written by them on 17th January, 1882, for the important purpose of furnishing our Consul-General with arguments wherewith finally to reject the Chamber's claim.—“*The intervention of the Chamber would be all the more serious, seeing that it is certainly disposed to eliminate all the European element from the Administration of the country.*”¹ And speaking of the Chamber's desire to have a vote in the allotment of Government contracts, the memorandum proceeds,—“*It is beyond doubt that thereby are meant all contracts with European functionaries, and all concessions to foreigners.*”²

² Ibid. p. 65.

A month later, when the Chamber had begun actually to display the pruning-hook, the Comptrollers again urgently pleaded in the favour of their own love of patronage and place,—

“The Chamber is about to call for the Revenue Survey Estimates. *This Department will be severely handled, and I expect that proposals will be made to withdraw it from European control.*”³

³ Parliamentary Papers 3249 of 1882, p. 45.

On 20th March, the Chamber still continuing the pruning policy, our Consul-General reported that one of the promises that the Delegates had exacted from the National Ministry was “*the replacement in the various Administrations of foreigners by Egyptians.*”⁴ And, speaking of a Commission that the Chamber had ordered to inquire into the Department of the Customs, he added, “*No doubt the object is to get rid of the English Director-General, and replace him by an Egyptian.*”⁵ Here was a direct reprisal. Evidently the new Ministry had good memories. They had not forgotten the “*weeding out of the old leaven*”⁶ in 1878.

⁴ Ibid. p. 79.

⁵ Ibid. p. 79.

⁶ Parliamentary Papers 2233 of 1879, p. 289.

Lord Granville was obviously struck with the minuteness of the issue for which our officials were contending with the Chamber, the reasonableness of its claim, and the legal soundness of its title under the 31st Article of the Organic Law, to vote the half of the Budget which dealt with the supplies for the internal Administration of the

country. To our Consul-General's telegram of 10th January, which had exactly defined this claim, he replied that he would not advocate "*a total or permanent exclusion of the Chamber from handling the Budget.*"¹ But he coupled this assertion with an admission which shows into how wrong a position Her Majesty's Government had drifted, in officially using at all, at such a supreme crisis, the influence of the British Nation in favour of the Bondholders' claims. He declared that he was inspired with "*caution*" in conceding this reasonable request by a regard, not for the security of the Suez Canal, or India, or even for good government in Egypt, but for "THE PECUNIARY INTERESTS ON BEHALF OF WHICH HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT HAVE BEEN ACTING."²

¹ Parliamentary Papers 3230 of 1882, p. 44.

² Ibid. p. 44.

Lord Granville was, however, so far staggered by the justice and moderation of the Chamber's claim, that he thought it only right to demand from our Consul-General, by an urgent telegram dated 12th January, 1882, "*a report by telegraph as to what will be THE PRECISE EFFECT if the Notables obtain the power over the finances claimed by them.*"³

³ Ibid. p. 44.

The candid avowal which was at last elicited from our Consul-General, in his reply dated 13th January, *should be written large, embodying as it does the only reason why England is now at war with the Egyptian people.* Here it is :—

"OFFICIAL SALARIES, NOT REGULATED BY CONTRACT, WOULD BE UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE CHAMBER, SO THAT IT WOULD BE ABLE TO ABOLISH THE LAND SURVEY*, WHICH IS THE RESULT OF NO INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT, AND TO DISMISS MANY EUROPEANS IN THE ADMINISTRATION."⁴

⁴ Ibid. p. 45.

The next move of our Consul-General, after sending off the above telegram, was deliberately and finally to break with the Chamber, and thereby directly cause all that followed, down to the massacre of the 11th June, the bombardment and burning of Alexandria on the 11th July, and the war in which we are now engaged with the Egyptian

* This Department alone employed 111 Europeans. See Parliamentary Papers, 3237 of 1882, pp. 4 and 5.

nation. *What was Lord Granville's action on receipt of that telegram? If he sent a reply, it has, all important as it is, been purposely omitted from the Blue Books; and, whether official or demi-official, Parliament should insist on its publication. Did it indicate that the contents of the message had at last convinced the English Cabinet that war to the knife should be declared by the British Nation on the Egyptian Parliament, for threatening to reduce European "official salaries"? Were such a thing credible, the decisive action taken by our Consul-General, two days after sending the message, would favour this belief. If no reply was sent from Downing Street, then the responsibility rests on our Consul-General for taking the most important and fatal step of 15th January without instructions, and thereby forcing Lord Granville to support him, after the fact, in an irrevocable national wrong. Our Consul-General reports that on the 15th January he for the last time definitely told the President, "that the demand of the Chamber to vote the Budget, infringed International Engagements," and that to the despairing appeal of the President, at least "to endeavour to find a compromise," he "did not give encouragement."*¹

¹ Parliamentary Papers
3230 of 1882, p. 48.

It may perhaps be imagined that no British Consul-General, alive to the claims of common humanity, knowing international law and usage, and aware therefore that even the large pecuniary claims of the Bondholders formed no international grievance, could ever have intended to push to the extreme arbitrament of the cannon and the sword such a miserably paltry issue as that of the Chamber's claim to vote the Unassigned half of the Budget, from which European salaries were paid; and it may perhaps be urged that the unforeseen has happened with respect to all the horrors of war that have resulted from his final rejection of the claim. Would that it were possible to acquit him of this deliberate blood-guiltiness; but it is not. After the Consul-General had pronounced the above final refusal, the President of the Chamber again pleaded for some compromise, urging, with great

earnestness, that, while the policy of the Chamber was moderate, and peaceful, and friendly, on the other hand "IT WAS MERELY REPRESENTING THE UNANIMOUS WISH OF THE COUNTRY, and was not acting under any pressure from the military."¹ Consequently it could not lightly assent to a total surrender of its obvious duty of supervising the administrative expenditure of the Nation. Our Consul-General only replied to these pleadings by reiterating that he could give "*no encouragement that a compromise on this question would be possible*,"² and he directly challenged the Chamber to war with England and France on the issue, by declaring to their President that, "THE ONLY WAY OF OBTAINING COMPLIANCE WITH THEIR DEMAND WOULD BE BY FORCE, and the consequence of resorting to such means had been clearly stated by the Governments of England and France."³ And the following day, when writing to Lord Granville, he congratulated the British Government that "*if Cherif Pasha*" (our creature-Minister, who was preventing the new Decree from issuing) "*remains in office, THE OBJECT OF THE CHAMBER CAN ONLY BE OBTAINED BY VIOLENCE.*"⁴

¹ Parliamentary Papers 3290 of 1882, p. 55.

² Ibid. p. 55.

³ Ibid. p. 55.

⁴ Ibid. p. 54.

Nor can it be said that our Consul-General used these strong terms merely in the belief that he would thereby intimidate the Chamber to recede from its position peacefully, and thereby avoid extreme measures. On the contrary, he was quite aware that, though the Chamber were anxious to effect any fair compromise, they could not, or would not, give way altogether, and that hostilities must be the consequence of his rejection of their claim. Accordingly, on 20th January he telegraphed to his Government, intimating that war must inevitably be declared—not on Arabi Bey for any military revolt, but on the Parliament of Egypt for persisting in voting their own Budget—in the words, "ARMED INTERVENTION WILL BECOME A NECESSITY IF WE ADHERE TO THE REFUSAL TO ALLOW THE BUDGET TO BE VOTED BY THE CHAMBER; AND WE CANNOT DO OTHERWISE, as it forms only a part of a whole scheme of revolution."⁵

⁵ Ibid. p. 52.

The Chamber and its President having been thus finally disposed of, it only remained to serve on the Khedive's

Government an Official document embodying the final rejection by the Powers of the Chamber's claim. It has already been recorded¹ that about this time the two European Comptrollers, although paid servants of the Egyptian State, had shown themselves even more active than our Consul-General himself in opposing the Chamber, and had for this purpose, prepared a Memorandum, dated 17th January, 1882. In this document, with laboured logic, they pretended that the Khedive's own Decrees were International instruments, and thus invented the sophism, "That the Chamber could not vote the Budget without the assent of the English and French Governments."² It will be remembered that they concluded with a statement of the reasons for refusing this right to the Chamber, the chief of which had reference to *the known disposition of the Chamber to reduce the number of European appointments and to supervise Europeans' contracts with Government.* It must now finally be noticed, that on 27th January, 1882, the English and French Consuls-General, in name of the English and French Nations, served on the Egyptian Government, as their own, a plagiarized copy of the above-named Memorandum; having first altered its date from 17th to 27th January,³ and having carefully omitted the tell-tale reasons for opposing the aspirations of the Chamber given at its close, namely, that the Chamber wished to reduce and supervise European appointments and contracts. **THUS THE STATE PAPER WHICH FORMED OUR FINAL ACT OF RUPTURE WITH THE EGYPTIAN NATION, WAS ONE WRITTEN BY TWO EUROPEAN SERVANTS OF THE EGYPTIAN STATE, IN DEFENCE OF THEIR OWN AND THEIR FRIENDS' SALARIES!**

Meanwhile the Chamber, acting in accord with the National Ministry, proceeded to use its new powers with an intelligence and moderation which completely disproved the allegation that it was incapable of managing public affairs, and fully confirmed the verdict passed upon it by our Consul-General, viz. that it would only be dangerous in supervising the European servants of the State in the matter of their official duties, and perhaps reducing

¹ See ante, p. 70.

² Parliamentary Papers 3230 of 1882, p. 68.

³ Parliamentary Papers 3230 of 1882. Compare pp. 64 and 69.

their enormous salaries. The report of the Chamber's proceedings furnished by our Consul-General mentions a few of the subjects discussed. The extension of two of the great canals, in order to increase the area of irrigation; the suppression of illegal privileges acquired by certain Natives, through placing themselves under the protection of Bedouins; the regulation of the duties and powers of the village sheikhs, and a proposal for a census of each Bedouin tribe, were all determined upon at its sitting of 28th February, 1882.¹ On 13th March the Chamber appointed a Commission "to inquire into the Customs Administration." This created a flutter among our Officials, because an English officer named Caillard was the "Director-General," with a salary of about 3000*l.* a year. Lord Granville even went the length of urging on our Consul-General "that Her Majesty's Government attached great importance to the retaining of Mr. Caillard in his post." The fear proved unreasonable; for the Commission was admitted by our Consul-General to be "well composed, and not unfavourable to an impartial inquiry."² Two members of it, objected to by our officials, were removed, and others substituted;³ and the Consul-General reported on 17th April, that "the investigation was turning entirely in Mr. Caillard's favour."⁴ Moreover, so moderately did the Chamber use its new authority, that, at its sitting on 2nd March, 1882, it actually proceeded with the distribution of the miserable pittance which our Comptrollers had, as already described, set aside as a colourable compensation to the cultivators, under the iniquitous revocation of the Law of Moukâbala, and avoided any display of irritation, even on such an exasperating subject.⁵

It soon became clear, however, that abuses by Europeans were to be dealt with as well as those by Natives. The Land Revenue Survey Establishment, with its crowd of European officers, was going to be looked into. A motion for the production of the Estimates of this Department caused much apprehension, probably based on the knowledge that, from the expensive character of the European

¹ Parliamentary Papers 3249 of 1882, pp. 76 and 77.

² Ibid. p. 84.

³ Ibid. p. 90.

⁴ Ibid. p. 90.

⁵ Ibid. p. 77.

staff, they would not bear inspection. The apprehension found vent in a Memorandum by Sir Auckland Colvin (who had come from India as Head of the Department, and had himself quadrupled the number of Europeans in it) as follows :—“ *This Department will be severely handled, and I expect that proposals will be made to withdraw it from European Control.*”¹

¹ Parliamentary Papers
3249 of 1882, p. 45.

And in truth the Chamber's wish on this point seemed not unnatural, as, in answer to interpellations, the fact had been elicited from the Minister of Finance that the Department had up to that time cost 136,354l., while particulars were withheld as to “what profit had accrued from it to the Government or the people.”² The Chamber was, moreover, making its ameliorating influence felt in the interior, by checking abuses and oppression by Europeans. On 28th February, 1882, it referred to the Minister of Public Works a complaint by the villagers against “certain European proprietors,” who had dried up a canal “by setting up pumps for irrigating their lands;”³ and a highly paid European named Rowsell, who “farmed the administration” of the Crown lands, wrote to the Comptrollers, censuring the Chamber for “*having possessed the peasant with the idea that he can arrive at what he is told is liberty by leaps.*” By way of illustrating this undue yearning after liberty, Mr. Rowsell proceeded to complain, in a highly injured strain, that, whereas in former times, when strikes occurred among his labourers, he had always been accustomed to put a stop to them by ordering the Egyptian Mudirs to imprison the leaders of the movement, he now found he could not do so. “*To-day,*” he wrote, “*I asked a Mudir to imprison two most troublesome Sheikhs, ON MY DEMAND, as persons who prevented the villagers from working.* He admitted that he did not like the mission;” for this reason, viz. that “*if a man is arrested, he telegraphs to the Chamber, AND THE MUDIR IS REQUIRED BY TELEGRAPH TO EXPLAIN.*”⁴ “*This,*” exclaimed Mr. Rowsell, “*is in itself an illustration of the extent to which the new-born ‘freedom’ of the fellah can be carried!*”⁵

² Ibid. p. 76.

³ Ibid. p. 77.

⁴ Ibid. p. 43.

⁵ Ibid. p. 42.

It was plain that short work must be made with a Chamber that threatened vested interests in this unceremonious fashion. The Chamber might be willing duly to pay the Bondholders; but it clearly was not willing to recognize the omnipotence of the European officials. A few more curtailments like this of Europeans' privileges would make life in Egypt not worth living. That such a Chamber should be permitted to vote the supplies of the Administration was not to be thought of. The Powers must be moved to action, and they would be moved most readily by the good old plan which had achieved such grand success on former occasions. Reports must be once more called for from European underlings, to prove to the Powers that the cultivator was growing more wretched with each curtailment of the authority of the European officials. Our Consul-General accordingly wrote to his subordinates, intimating "*his wish to have a memorandum as to the effect the late changes of Government have had upon local authority.*"¹

¹ Parliamentary Papers
3249 of 1882, p. 42.

The required evidence was speedily forthcoming. Every item, as it arrived, was immediately sent to Her Majesty's Government, with suitable comments by our Consul-General, pointing out "that the local administrative authority in the provinces was fast diminishing,"² and that reports from the provinces spoke only of "murder and brigandage."³ It is needless to say that Mr. Felice was again in full request, to furnish testimony for this foregone conclusion. But our Consul-General in his present strait did not scruple likewise to forward anonymously any other scraps that reached him, omitting, in his zeal, to notice that some of the extracts he gave established the conclusion—not that authority was powerless, but, on the contrary, that crime was promptly detected and punished. The subjoined quotations will show the class of evidence which was considered valuable:—

² Ibid. p. 40.

³ Ibid. p. 56.

The natives themselves are afraid to go from one village to another.

The European residents are afraid, and among these I may mention the agent of an English firm.

The high officials complain that they are not allowed to imprison suspected persons, and matters are therefore getting worse.⁴

The fellaheen are now reduced to straits in order to obtain money; the

⁴ Ibid. p. 55.

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banks no longer lend any large sums, and the petty usurers ask interest as high as 72 per cent. Land is everywhere losing its value.¹

¹ Parliamentary Papers 3249 of 1882, p. 42.

There has been arrested the offender Abdul Medjid, who had murdered Hassen Effendi, a farmer of Oum Reniad. *I have seen the thick stick, with several stains of blood, with which the head of the murdered man had been fractured.* The offender lived in a small room resembling a den, in which were found two pistols, two double-barrelled guns, an axe, and two large knives.²

² Ibid. p. 59.

At Kafr Hanna Fadel, a band of thirty robbers knocked at the door of the owner of the place. On his awaking he asked what they wanted, and said he was poor and had no money, but could give them bread. The robbers accepted, and two baskets full of bread were lowered from a window. *Having eaten the bread, they went away.*³

³ Ibid. p. 55.

With such conclusive evidence before them of the misery of the people of Egypt, immediately following upon the diminution of the power of the European Comptrollers, it was clearly the duty of our officials to urge on Her Majesty's Government the re-establishment of their influence, on pure grounds of humanity, unmixed with the smallest tincture of self-interest. But to do this successfully, it was also necessary to efface from the mind of the British nation the idea of a really National movement in Egypt. From this date, therefore (February, 1882), systematic efforts were made to keep altogether out of the public view the Chamber of Deputies, *whose action concerning the Budget had been the sole cause whereby the National Ministry was placed in power*, and to represent that *mutiny in the army* was the cause of the agitation against the Control. The English people must be convinced that the new feature in Egyptian politics consisted, not of a determined feeling in the minds of the Chamber and people against European spoliation, but of a feeling of rebellion in the army against the just authority of the Khedive! The Rescript of 28th August, 1878, by which, at the instance of the Powers, the Khedive had solemnly pledged himself to act according to the wishes of the Ministry, must also be carefully kept out of view, now that the Consuls-General were constraining him to make war on the Ministry instead of obeying its wishes. The Control had to be re-established at all hazards for its own selfish objects. But

the Powers of Europe must be induced to re-rivet its chains on the hapless people, under the belief that there existed a real longing for its beneficent presence among all classes, and that the longing was only repressed by the military terrorism of "a particular soldier," who for this purpose must be represented as possessing a strange knack of intimidating 5,000,000 of his countrymen. The "particular soldier" must moreover be assiduously represented as a villain of the deepest dye, in flat defiance of the facts on record. On 1st February, 1881, he had by force secured his own escape from a prison, when treacherously captured on the occasion of a pretended marriage procession.¹ On 9th September, 1881, he had forced the dismissal of an anti-National Ministry, and the appointment in its place of one pledged to assemble the National Chamber, which our officials had persistently prevented their creature, the Khedive, from convoking;² and on 5th November he had compelled the release of Enani Bey, who had been basely seized and imprisoned on a false charge.³ Our officials believed, however, that the British public do not remember history; and in picturing Arabi Bey as a villain and a caitiff, it mattered nothing that the only occasions when he had employed coercion on the Khedive, had been to prevent the perpetration of treachery, despotism, and crime of a character abhorrent to every Englishman.

¹ See ante, p. 51

² See ante, p. 52.

³ See ante, p. 57.

It is quite unnecessary to do more than allude to the events that followed in quick succession, after the British and French Consuls-General had finally refused all compromise with the Chamber of Delegates on 15th January, 1882, and had thereby forced the latter to insist on the resignation of Cherif Pasha and the appointment by the Khedive of a National Ministry in the following month. The sole cause of the change—the sole issue raised—was the refusal of the Comptrollers to allow the unassigned Budget to be voted by the Chamber. The Comptrollers themselves were foremost in privately urging on their superiors that this was the only point in dispute. On 6th February,

1882, two days after the National Ministry had taken office, they wrote to their supporters the Consuls-General, insisting on this fact, as follows:—"THE FACT MUST NOT BE LOST SIGHT OF *that Cherif Pasha's Ministry fell ONLY because it would not disregard the opposition of the English and French Governments to the pretension put forward by the Chamber to vote the Budget.*"¹

¹ Parliamentary Papers
3249 of 1882, p. 19.

Lord Granville was still very loth so far to make shipwreck of Liberal principles as to go to war with the Parliament of Egypt to prevent it from voting its own supplies. He accordingly, early in April, 1882, again entered into "confidential discussions as to the extension which could be given to the powers of the Chamber,"² in this respect. But this renewed coquetting with the National aspirations, created fresh alarm in the mind of the Consul-General, who, bent only on precipitating a crisis, induced him finally to abandon all attempt at conciliation by urging, with extraordinary logic, that "the position of the Government in Egypt was insecure, and that it would be better *to wait the course of events*, before entering upon negotiations with them."³ The "insecurity" of the Khedive's Government was, on the Consul-General's own admission, caused solely by its refusal, at his instance, to confer on the Chamber that extension of their powers which they demanded. Continued refusal could only therefore increase that insecurity. "To wait the course of events before entering upon negotiations," was therefore purposely to withhold the cure while awaiting the exacerbation of the disease. The argument, however, had the desired effect in silencing Lord Granville, who had already joined with France in an Identical Circular sent to the Great Powers on 11th February, with the avowed object of securing "that any eventual intervention should represent the united action and authority of all Europe,"⁴ in case the Chamber should persist in their demand.

² Parliamentary Papers
3258 of 1882, p. 5.

³ Ibid. p. 55.

⁴ Parliamentary Papers
3249 of 1882, p. 10.

Less creditable means were also resorted to with the object of suppressing the agitation for Constitutional

reform. It has already been shown that Arabi Pasha was much more than a military officer,—that he was fully recognized as a political leader of the Chamber and of the people, in the path of Constitutional progress.¹ Already had his political enemies, on 1st February, 1881, headed by the then Minister of War, Osman Pasha Rifki, once attempted and very nearly compassed his destruction, by the treacherous device of an invitation to arrange a marriage procession.² On 12th April, 1882, a second conspiracy of an equally nefarious character was discovered, and its guilt was brought home to the same old enemy. At the same time an allegation was put forward that Arabi Pasha had tortured the persons convicted of the plot. The allegation was “strenuously denied by the Egyptian Government,”³ but our Consul-General nevertheless reported that “the general opinion” was that it was true. The only particle of evidence, however, which he adduced as conclusive proof of this disgraceful charge, so necessary for discrediting Arabi Pasha’s character before the world, was received from anonymous persons and at second hand as follows:—“An English gentleman has to-day informed me that two natives of condition, living close to the barracks where the prisoners are confined, have told him separately that they have heard the cries of the prisoners at night.”⁴ The Consul-General made persistent efforts to obtain free pardons for the convicted persons, and eventually secured a commutation of their sentence. Disputes were fostered by our officials between our creature, the Khedive, and the National Ministry, followed by the resignation of the latter, and its restoration to power, on the discovery that no anti-National Ministry could be formed.⁵ British and French ironclads arrived at Alexandria on the 20th of May, our Consul-General having assured his Government on the 14th “*that the political advantage*” (in reviving the power of the Control) “*of the arrival of the combined squadron at Alexandria was so great as to override the danger which it might possibly cause to Europeans in Cairo.*”⁶ The purpose of the arrival of the fleets was

¹ See ante, p. 54.

² See ante, p. 51.

³ Parliamentary Papers 3249 of 1882, p. 104.

⁴ Ibid. p. 104.

⁵ Parliamentary Papers 3251 of 1882, p. 18.

⁶ Parliamentary Papers 3249 of 1882, p. 132.

plainly stated to be "to restore to the Khedive the authority which belongs to him," and for this purpose *to demand the resignation of the National Ministers*.¹ The Sultan had no wish for the restoration of the Khedive's authority. On the contrary, he urged that "*he would be willing to agree that another Ruler should be substituted in place of Tewfik*;"² and he strongly protested against the presence of the fleets for any such purpose. On the other hand, the Consuls-General of England and France, by way of forcing the hands of their respective Governments, presented an unauthorized Ultimatum on 25th May, which stated that "*if necessary they would insist*" on the dismissal of the National Ministry, and the exile of Arabi Pasha.³ With audacious misrepresentation, our Consul-General, having secured the passive acquiescence of his own appointee, the President of the Chamber, Sultan Pasha, proceeded to assert that this Ultimatum "*only demands the execution of the will of the Chamber expressed by Sultan Pasha its President*"⁴ notwithstanding that he had frankly reported to his own Government, three days before, that "*the President of the Chamber can no longer rely upon the Deputies, on account of the feeling against intervention which is now gaining ground*."⁵ The Consul-General, when presenting this ultimatum, was already well aware that the acceptance at least of its latter condition was impossible, as he had himself reported, two days earlier, that the officers of the army had declared, in presence of the French Consul, "*that they would hew Arabi Pasha in pieces if he deserted them*."⁶ Her Majesty's Government, always deluded by the representation that only a slight exhibition of force was needed, to reduce these cowardly and isolated military mutineers to obedience, gave their approval to the ultimatum *ex post facto*. The Egyptian Ministers of course rejected it, and it was fully known to the Powers beforehand that it "*would be met with a refusal*."⁷ Closely following on these events came the riot in Alexandria on the 11th June, said to have been begun by some Greeks, but in any case readily

¹ Parliamentary Papers 3258 of 1882, p. 7.

² Parliamentary Papers 3251 of 1882, p. 31.

³ Ibid. p. 34.

⁴ Ibid. p. 35.

⁵ Ibid. p. 29.

⁶ Ibid. p. 29.

⁷ Parliamentary Papers 3258 of 1882, p. 8.

explainable by the state of tension of the public mind, and the known hostility of our officials to the National cause. Amongst the guesses that have been put forward as to the loss of life on that occasion, the most probable one is that ten natives were slaughtered for every European. At the eleventh hour (15th June), our Consul-General confessed his belief that as "*Patriotism*" and "*Law*" were "*the watch-words of the Military Chiefs,*" "*they might be induced to retire if a Constitution were granted by the Khedive.*" The Khedive was certified as being himself "*not unfavourable to the idea ;*" but the Consul-General, with official duplicity, while professing to support it, and even to have suggested it, took care to put it aside, by impressing on Lord Granville that it "*could not be carried out until the Conference has been formally convened.*"¹ In vain the Consuls-General of Germany and Austria "*implored*" the British Representative "*to recommend to the Khedive the formation of a Ministry approved by the Military Party, and not to risk the lives of 30,000 Europeans by abstaining from doing so.*"² Our Consul-General plainly saw that the recognition in any way of either the National or Military Party would only retard the re-establishment of the Control, one and indivisible, and therefore he opposed all efforts towards a settlement. Dervish Pasha's mission, and the proceedings of the Conference at Constantinople, need hardly be named in this history.

Our officials, however, had at last succeeded in attaining the result they wished for; and the Consul-General must have deemed himself a successful diplomatist as he gazed on the magnificent fleet of ironclads in the bay, and recalled to mind the prophecy he had uttered to Lord Granville on 20th January, in the words, "*Armed intervention will become a necessity if we refuse to allow the Budget to be voted by the Chamber.*"³ A conciliatory policy towards the National chiefs could hardly be expected from one who, while occupying the most responsible and delicate position in this great crisis, had his

¹ Parliamentary Papers
3295 of 1882, p. 74.

² Ibid. p. 81.

³ Parliamentary Papers
3290 of 1882, p. 52.

eyes so bent on the selfish object of restoring the European control in Egypt, that he held as of less account even the awful horrors of war,—ruin, outrage, starvation, misery, and death to thousands,—so long as that object was attained. What else but this can be gathered from the inhuman advice tendered by him to Lord Granville on the 7th of May, which caused the immediate despatch of the ironclads to Alexandria? “*Some complication of an acute nature,*” he wrote, “*must supervene before any satisfactory solution of the Egyptian question can be attained; AND IT WOULD BE WISER TO HASTEN IT, THAN TO ENDEAVOUR TO RETARD IT.*”¹

¹ Parliamentary Papers
3249 of 1882, p. 107.

Their task is done. Their work has prospered. England’s enormous power is now arrayed against the feeble Egyptian State. The ignoble scheme for pitting the strong against the weak has come to full fruition. The lamb cannot long contend against the lion. Ships more powerful than have ever fought the stoutest foe; shells more frightful than have ever burst over a devoted city—these are the earnest that in a few short months the Control will regain its powers. Carnage there will be and conflagration, as the dreadful missiles burst over the teeming city. Dismayed by sights and sounds new even to Western eyes and ears, the people will fly madly from the shore. The sick and old will be left to an agonizing death. Perchance helpless women and children, in tens of thousands, fleeing wildly from the fiery storm, will perish of hunger in the sandy plains. The birds of prey that sit on the hill at Pompey’s Pillar will get an unaccustomed feast of carrion.

As the stately fleet forms in line of battle, with guns run out and decks cleared for action, the Comptrollers—paid servants of the Egyptian State—blind to the shame of the coming contest between strength and weakness, deaf to the awful cries about to be wrung from thousands of helpless beings, put off at the last moment from the

shore, and take refuge in a British vessel, as in an ark of safety, to escape the ruin they have wrought, and to guide the aim of the monster guns that are to lay in ashes the great commercial capital: while the British Foreign Office, still duped by their officials, are able once more to efface from their minds all idea of Bondholders and British placemanship, and, amid the lurid light of Alexandria's flames, to let down the curtain on the second act of the great Egyptian tragedy, with the edifying sentiment:—"HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT HAS PURSUED OBJECTS OF NO SELFISH CHARACTER,¹ AND HAS NO INTERESTS INCONSISTENT WITH THOSE OF THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE!"²

¹Parliamentary Papers
3161 of 1882, p. 73.

²Parliamentary Papers
3258 of 1882, p. 13.

[*See over for Appendix.*

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APPENDIX.

TABULAR STATEMENT SHOWING THAT THE EGYPTIAN STATE HAS ALREADY REPAID TO THE BONDHOLDERS THE WHOLE OF THE PRINCIPAL MONEY LENT TO IT BY THEM, WITH INTEREST AT 6 PER CENT. PER ANNUM, THOUGH ACCORDING TO THE LONDON STOCK EXCHANGE LIST EGYPT STILL STANDS DEBTOR FOR £90,000,000.

Dates of Loans.	Amount in round numbers received, as per Mr. Cave's Report, Parliamentary Papers 1425 of 1876, p. 7.	Interest at 6 per cent. per Annum from dates of Loans to 1875.
1862	No trace of proceeds of a Loan nominally of £3,292,800.	—
1864	£5,000,000	£3,300,000
1865	3,000,000	1,800,000
1866	2,500,000	1,350,000
1867	2,000,000	960,000
1868	7,000,000	2,940,000
1870	5,000,000	1,500,000
1873	21,000,000	2,520,000
Total amount received, 45,500,000		Simple interest to 1875. } 14,370,000

Total amount received as above	...	...	...	£45,500,000
Amount paid to the Bondholders by way of Interest and Sinking Funds up to 1875 as per Mr. Cave's Report, p. 7	...	...	29,570,000	
Deduct simple interest on £45,500,000 at 6 per cent. as above	...	...	14,370,000	
Difference which should have been applied to the reduction of debt	15,200,000		15,200,000	
Total unpaid in 1875	...	...	30,300,000	
Amount paid to Bondholders in 1876, as per p. 10 of same Report	...	5,700,000		
Deduct one year's interest on £30,300,000 at 6 per cent.	...	1,818,000		
Difference which should have been applied to the reduction of debt	...	3,882,000	3,882,000	
Total unpaid in 1876	...	...	26,418,000	
Amount paid to Bondholders in 1877, as per p. 10 of same Report	...	5,700,000		
Deduct one year's interest on £26,418,000 at 6 per cent.	...	1,585,080		
Difference which should have been applied to the reduction of debt	...	4,114,920	4,114,920	
Total unpaid in 1877	...	...	22,303,080	
Amount paid to Bondholders in 1878 as per p. 10 of same Report	...	5,700,000		
Deduct one year's interest on £22,303,080 at 6 per cent.	...	1,338,180		
Difference which should have been applied to the reduction of debt	...	4,361,820	4,361,820	
Total unpaid in 1878	...	...	17,941,260	
Amount paid to Bondholders in 1879 as per p. 10 of same Report	...	5,700,000		
Deduct one year's interest on £17,941,260 at 6 per cent.	...	1,076,466		
Difference which should have been applied to the reduction of debt	...	4,623,534	4,623,534	
Total unpaid in 1879	...	...	13,317,726	
Amount paid to Bondholders in 1880 as per p. 10 of same Report	...	5,700,000		
Deduct one year's interest on £13,317,726 at 6 per cent.	...	799,056		
Difference which should have been applied to the reduction of debt	...	4,900,944	4,900,944	
Total unpaid in 1880	...	...	8,416,782	
Amount paid to Bondholders in 1881 as per Law of Liquidation (Parliamentary Papers, 2766 of 1881, p. 2)	...	3,500,000		
Deduct one year's interest on £8,416,782 at 6 per cent.	...	505,002		
Difference which should have been applied to the reduction of debt	...	2,994,998	2,994,998	
Total unpaid in 1881	...	...	5,421,784	
Amount payable to Bondholders in 1882 as per Law of Liquidation (Parliamentary Papers, 2766 of 1881, p. 2)	...	3,500,000		
Deduct one year's interest on £5,421,784 at 6 per cent.	...	325,302		
Difference which should have been applied to the reduction of debt	...	3,174,698	3,174,698	
Total unpaid in 1882	...	...	2,247,086	
Against this must be placed a very much larger offset, owing to no annual reduction having been applied to the debt in the above calculation for the 11 years before 1875, which, if duly allowed for, would produce a further reduction of, say	...	...	7,000,000	
BALANCE IN FAVOUR OF EGYPT	...	...	£4,752,914	



